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THE WARFARE OF SCIENCE



BY

ANDREW DICKSON WHITE, LL. D., L. H. D.

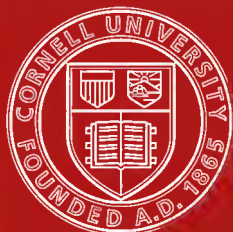
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"VII. COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY"

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NEW CHAPTERS IN THE WARFARE OF SCIENCE

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NEW CHAPTERS IN
THE WARFARE OF SCIENCE.

VII.
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY.

PART I.

A FEW years since, Maxime Du Camp, an eminent member of the French Academy, traveling from the Red Sea to the Nile through the Desert of Kosseir, came to a barren slope covered with bowlders, rounded and glossy.

His Mohammedan camel-drivers accounted for them on this wise :

“Many years ago Hadji Abdul-Aziz, a sheik of the dervishes, was traveling on foot through this desert; it was summer; the sun was hot and the dust stifling; thirst parched his lips, fatigue weighed down his back, sweat dropped from his forehead, when looking up he saw—on this very spot—a garden beautifully green, full of fruit, and, in the midst of it, the gardener.

“‘O fellow-man,’ cried Hadji Abdul-Aziz, ‘in the name of Allah, clement and merciful, give me a melon and I will give you my prayers.’

“The gardener answered, ‘I care not for your prayers; give me money, and I will give you fruit.’

“‘But,’ said the dervish, ‘I am a beggar; I have never had money; I am thirsty and weary, and one of your melons is all that I need.’

“‘No,’ said the gardener, ‘go to the Nile and quench your thirst.’

“Thereupon the dervish, lifting his eyes toward heaven, made this prayer: ‘O Allah, thou who in the midst of the desert didst make the fountain of Zem-Zem spring forth to satisfy the thirst

of Ismail, father of the faithful; wilt thou suffer one of thy creatures to perish thus of thirst and fatigue?"

"And it came to pass that, hardly had the dervish spoken, when an abundant dew descended upon him, quenching his thirst and refreshing him even to the marrow of his bones.

"Now at the sight of this miracle the gardener knew that the dervish was a holy man, beloved of Allah, and straightway offered him a melon.

"'Not so,' answered Hadji Abdul-Aziz, 'keep what thou hast, thou wicked man. May thy melons become as hard as thy heart, and thy field as barren as thy soul!'

"And straightway it came to pass that the melons were changed into these blocks of stone, and the grass into this sand, and never since has anything grown thereon."

In this story, and in myriads like it, we have a survival of that early conception of the universe in which so many of the leading moral and religious truths of the great sacred books of the world are imbedded.

All ancient sacred lore abounds in such mythical explanations of remarkable appearances in nature, and these are most frequently prompted by mountains, rocks, and boulders seemingly misplaced.

In India we have such typical examples among the Brahmans as the mountain-peak which Durgu threw at Parvati; and among the Buddhists the stone which Devadatti hurled at Buddha.

In Greece the Athenian, rejoicing in his belief that Athena guarded her chosen people, found it hard to understand why the great rock Lycabettus should be just too far from the Acropolis to be of use as an outwork; but a myth was developed which explained all. According to this, Athena had intended to make Lycabettus a defense for the Athenians, and she was bringing it through the air from Pallene for that very purpose; but, unfortunately, a raven met her and informed her of the wonderful birth of Erichthonius, which so surprised the goddess that she dropped the rock where it now stands.

So, too, a peculiar rock at Ægina was accounted for by a long and circumstantial legend to the effect that Peleus threw it at Phocas.

A similar mode of explaining such objects is seen in the mythologies of northern Europe. In Scandinavia we constantly find rocks which tradition accounts for by declaring that they were hurled by the old gods at each other, or at the early Christian churches.

In Teutonic lands, as a rule, wherever a strange rock or stone is found, there will be found a myth or a legend, heathen or Christian, to account for it.

So, too, in Celtic countries; typical of this mode of thought in Brittany and in Ireland is the popular belief that such features in the landscape were dropped by the devil or by fairies.

Even at a much later period such myths have grown and bloomed; Marco Polo gives a long and circumstantial legend of a mountain in Asia Minor which, not long before his visit, was removed by a Christian who had "faith as a grain of mustard-seed," and, remembering the Saviour's promise, transferred the mountain to its present place by prayer, "at which marvel many Saracens became Christians."*

Similar mythical explanations are also found, in all the older religions of the world, for curiously marked meteoric stones, fossils, and the like.

Typical examples are found in the imprint of Buddha's feet on stones in Siam and Ceylon; in the imprint of the body of Moses, which down to the middle of the last century was shown near Mount Sinai; in the imprint of Poseidon's trident on the Acropolis at Athens; in the imprint of the hands or feet of Christ on stones in France, Italy, and Palestine; in the imprint of the Virgin's tears on stones at Jerusalem; in the imprint of the feet of Abraham at Jerusalem and of Mohammed on a stone in the Mosque of Khait Bey at Cairo; in the imprint of the fingers of giants on stones in the Scandinavian Peninsula, in north Germany, and in western France; in the imprint of the devil's thighs on a rock in Brittany, and of his claws on stones which he threw at churches in Cologne and Saint Pol-de-Léon; in the imprint of the shoulder of the devil's grandmother on the "elbow-stone" at the Mohrinersee; in the imprint of St. Otho's feet on a stone formerly preserved in the castle church at Stettin; in the imprint of the little finger of Christ and the head of Satan at Ehrenberg; and in the imprint of the feet of St. Agatha at Catania, in Sicily. To account for these appearances and myriads of others, long and interesting legends were developed, and out of this mass we may take one or two as typical.

* For Maxime Du Camp, see "Le Nil, Egypte et Nubie," Paris, 1877, chapter v. For India, see Düncker, "Geschichte des Alterthums," iii, 366; also Coleman, "Mythology of the Hindus," p. 90. For Greece, as to the Lycabettus myth, see Leake, "Topography of Athens," vol. i, sec. 3; also Burnouf, "La Légende Athénienne," p. 152. For the rock at Ægina, see Charton, vol. i, p. 310. For Scandinavia, see Thorpe, "Northern Antiquities," *passim*. For Teutonic countries, see Grimm, "Deutsche Mythologie"; Panzer, "Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie," vol. ii; and especially J. B. Friedrich, "Symbolik und Mythologie der Natur," pp. 116 *et seq.* For Celtic examples I am indebted to that learned and genial scholar, Prof. J. P. Mahaffy, of Trinity College, Dublin. See also story of the devil dropping a rock when forced by the archangel Michael to aid him in building Mont Saint-Michel on the west coast of France, in Sébillot's "Traditions de la Haute-Bretagne," vol. i, p. 22; also multitudes of other examples in the same work. For Marco Polo, see in Grynæus, p. 337; also Charton, "Voyageurs anciens et modernes," pp. 274 *et seq.*, where the long and circumstantial legend is given.

One of the most beautiful was evolved at Rome. On the border of the mediæval city stands the church of "*Domine quo vadis*"; it was erected in honor of a stone, which is still preserved, bearing a mark resembling a human footprint—perhaps the bed of a fossil.

Out of this a pious legend grew as naturally as a wild rose in a prairie. According to this story, in one of the first great persecutions the heart of St. Peter failed him, and he attempted to flee from the city; arriving outside the walls he was suddenly confronted by the Master, whereupon Peter in amazement asked, "Lord, where goest thou?" (*Domine quo vadis* ?); to which the Master answered, "To Rome, to be crucified again." The apostle, thus rebuked, returned to martyrdom; the Master vanished, but left, as a perpetual memorial, his footprint in the solid rock.

Still another legend accounts for a curious mark in a stone at Jerusalem. According to this, St. Thomas, after the ascension of the Lord, was again troubled with doubts, whereupon the Virgin Mother threw down her girdle, which left its imprint upon the rock, and thus converted the doubter fully and finally.

And still another example is seen at the very opposite extreme of Europe, in the legend of the priestess of Hertha in the island of Rugen. She had been unfaithful to her vows, and the gods furnished a proof of her guilt by causing her and her child to sink into the rock on which she stood.*

* For myths and legends crystallizing about bowlders and other stones curiously shaped or marked, see, on the general subject, in addition to works already cited, Des Brosses, "*Les Dieux Fétiches*," 1760, *passim*, but especially pp. 166, 167; and for a condensed statement as to worship paid them, see Gerard de Rialle, "*Mythologie comparée*," vol. vi, chapter ii. For imprints of Buddha's feet, see Tylor, "*Researches into the Early History of Mankind*," London, 1878, pp. 115 *et seq.*; also Coleman, p. 203, and Charton, "*Voyageurs anciens et modernes*," pp. 365, 366, where engravings of one of the imprints, and of the temple above another, are seen. There are five which are considered authentic by the Siamese, and a multitude of others more or less strongly insisted upon. For the imprint of Moses' body, see travelers from Sir John Maundeville down. For the mark of Neptune's trident, see last edition of Murray's "*Handbook of Greece*," vol. i, p. 322; and Burnouf, "*La Légende Athénienne*," p. 153. For imprint of the feet of Christ, and the Virgin's girdle and tears, see many of the older travelers in Palestine, as Arculf, Bouchard, Roger, and especially Bertrandon de la Brocquière in Wright's "*Collection*," pp. 339, 340; also Maundrell's "*Travels*" and Maundeville. For the curious legend regarding the imprint of Abraham's foot, see Weil, "*Biblische Legenden der Muselmänner*," pp. 91 *et seq.* For many additional examples in Palestine, particularly the imprints of the bodies of three apostles on stones in the Garden of Gethsemane and of St. Jerome's body in the desert, see Beauvau, "*Rélation du Voyage du Levant*," Nancy, 1615, *passim*. For the various imprints made by Satan and giants in Scandinavia and Germany, see Thorpe, ii, 85; Friedrichs, pp. 126 and *passim*. For a very rich collection of such explanatory legends regarding stones and marks in Germany, see Karl Bartsch, "*Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg*," Wien, 1880, vol. ii, pp. 420 *et seq.* For a woodcut representing the imprint of St. Agatha's feet at Catania, see Charton, "*Voyageurs anciens et modernes*," vol. ii, p. 75. For a woodcut representing the imprint of Christ's feet on the stone from which he ascended to heaven, see woodcut in Maundeville, edition of 1481, in the White Library,

Another and very fruitful source of explanatory myths is found in ancient centers of volcanic action, and especially in old craters of volcanoes and fissures filled with water.

In China we have, among other examples, Lake Man, which was once the site of the flourishing city Chiang Shui, overwhelmed and sunk on account of the heedlessness of its inhabitants regarding a divine warning.

In Phrygia the lake and morass near Tyana were ascribed to the wrath of Zeus and Hermes, who, having visited the cities which formerly stood there, and having been refused shelter by all the inhabitants save Philemon and Baucis, sank the wicked cities beneath the lake and morass, but rewarded their benefactors.

Stories of similar import grew up to explain the crater near Sipylos in Asia Minor and that of Avernus in Italy; the latter came to be considered the mouth of the infernal regions, as every school-boy knows when he has read his Virgil.

In the later Christian mythologies we have such typical legends as those which grew up about the old crater in Ceylon; the salt water in it was accounted for by supposing it the tears of Adam and Eve, who retreated to this point after their expulsion from paradise and bewailed their sin during a hundred years.

So, too, in Germany we have multitudes of lakes supposed to owe their origin to the sinking of valleys as a punishment for human sin. Of these are the "Devil's Lake," near Güstrow, which rose and covered a church and its priests on account of their corruption; the lake at Probst-Jesar, which rose and covered an oak-grove and a number of peasants resting in it on account of their want of charity to beggars; and the Lucin Lake, which rose and covered a number of soldiers on account of their cruelty to a poor peasant.

Such legends are found throughout America and in Japan, and will doubtless be found throughout Asia and Africa, and especially among the volcanic lakes of South America, the pitch lakes of the Caribbean Islands, and even about the Salt Lake of Utah; for explanatory myths and legends under such circumstances are inevitable.*

Cornell University. For the legend of *Domine quo vadis*, see many books of travel and nearly all guide-books for Rome, from the mediæval "Mirabilia Romæ" to the latest edition of Murray. The footprints of Mohammed at Cairo were shown to the present writer in 1889. On the general subject, with many striking examples, see Falsan, "La Période glaciaire," Paris, 1889, pp. 17 and 294, 295.

* As to myths explaining volcanic craters and lakes, and embodying ideas of the wrath of Heaven against former inhabitants of the neighboring country, see Forbiger, "Alte Geographie," Hamburg, 1877, i, 563. For exaggerations concerning the Dead Sea, see *ibid.*, i, 575. For the sinking of Chiang Shui and other examples, see Denny's "Folklore of China," p. 126 *et seq.* For the sinking of the Phrygian region, the destruction of its inhabi-

To the same manner of explaining striking appearances in physical geography, and especially strange rocks and bowlders, we mainly owe the innumerable stories of the transformation of living beings, and especially of men and women, into these natural features.

In the mythology of China we constantly come upon legends of such transformations—from that of the first counselor of the Han dynasty to those of shepherds and sheep. In the Brahmanical mythology of India, Salagrama, the fossil ammonite, is recognized as containing the body of Vishnu's wife, and the Binlang stone has much the same relation to Siva; so, too, the nymph Ramba was changed, for offending Ketu, into a mass of sand; by the breath of Siva elephants were turned into stone, and in a very touching myth Luxman is changed into stone but afterward released. In the Buddhist mythology a Nat demon is represented as changing himself into a grain of sand.

Among the Greeks such transformation-myths come constantly before us—both the changing of stones to men and the changing of men to stones. Deucalion and Pyrrha, escaping from the flood, repopled the earth by casting behind them stones which became men and women; Heraulos was changed into stone for offending Mercury; Pyrrhus for offending Rhea; Phineus, and Polydektes with his guests, for offending Perseus; under the petrifying glare of Medusa's head such transformations became a thing of course.

To myth-making in obedience to the desire of explaining striking natural appearances, coupled with the idea that sin must be followed by retribution, we also owe the well-known Niobe myth. Having incurred the divine wrath, she saw those dearest to her destroyed by missiles from heaven, and was finally transformed into a rock on Mount Sipylus which bore some vague resemblance to the human form, and her tears became the rivulets which trickled from the neighboring strata.

Thus, in obedience to a moral and intellectual impulse, a striking geographical appearance was explained, and for ages pious Greeks looked with bated breath upon the rock at Sipylus which was once Niobe, just as for ages pious Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans looked with awe upon the salt pillar at the Dead Sea which was once Lot's wife.

taunts, and the saving of Philemon and Baucis, see Ovid's "Metamorphoses," Book VIII; also Bötticher, "Baumcultus der Alten," etc. For the lake in Ceylon arising from the tears of Adam and Eve, see variants of the original legend in Maundeville and in Jürgen Andersen, "Reisebeschreibung," 1669, ii, 132. For the volcanic nature of the Dead Sea, see Daubeney cited in Smith's "Dictionary," 1873, *sub voc.* "Palestine." For lakes in Germany owing their origin to human sin and various supernatural causes, see Karl Bartsch, "Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg," vol. i, pp. 397 *et seq.* For lakes in America, see any good collection of Indian legends. For lakes in Japan sunk supernaturally, see Braun's "Japanesische Märchen und Sagen," Leipsic, 1885, pp. 350, 351.

Pausanias, one of the most honest of ancient travelers, gives us a striking exhibition of this feeling. Having visited this monument of divine vengeance at Mount Sipylus, he tells us very naïvely that, though he could discern no human features when standing near it, he thought that he could see them when standing at a distance. There could hardly be a better example of that most common and deceptive of all things—belief created by the desire to believe.

In the pagan mythology of Scandinavia we have such typical examples as Börs slaying the giant Ymir and transforming his bones into bowlders; also “the giant who had no heart” transforming six brothers and their wives into stone; and, in the old Christian mythology, St. Olaf changing into stone the wicked giants who opposed his preaching.

So, too, in Celtic countries we have in Ireland such legends as those of the dancers turned into stone; and in Brittany, the stones at Plessé, which were once hunters and dogs violating the sanctity of Sunday; and the stones of Carnac, which were once soldiers who sought to kill St. Cornely.

Teutonic mythology inherited from its earlier Eastern days a similar mass of old legends, and developed a still greater mass of new ones. Thus, near the Königstein, which all visitors to the Saxon Switzerland know so well, is a boulder which for ages was believed to have once been a maiden transformed into stone for refusing to go to church; and near Rosenberg in Mecklenburg is another curiously shaped stone of which a similar story is told. Near Spornitz, in the same region, are seven bowlders whose forms and position are accounted for by a long and circumstantial legend that they were once seven impious herdsmen; near Brahlisdorf is a stone which, according to a similar explanatory myth, was once a blasphemous shepherd; near Schwerin are three bowlders which were once wasteful servants; and at Neustadt, down to a recent period, was shown a collection of stones which were once a bride and bridegroom with their horses and wagon—all punished for an act of cruelty; and these stories are but typical of thousands.

At the other extremity of Europe we may take, out of the multitude of explanatory myths, that which grew about the well-known group of bowlders near Belgrade. In the midst of them stands one larger than the rest: according to the legend which was developed to account for all these, there once lived there a swineherd, who was disrespectful to the consecrated host; whereupon he was changed into the larger stone, and his swine into the smaller ones. So also at Saloniki we have the pillars of the ruined temple, which are widely believed, especially among the Jews of that region, to have once been human beings, and are therefore known as the “enchanted columns.”

Among the Arabs we have an addition to our sacred account of Adam—the legend of the black stone of the Caaba at Mecca, into which the angel was changed who was charged by the Almighty to keep Adam away from the forbidden fruit, and who neglected his duty.

Similar old transformation legends are abundant among the Indians of America, the negroes of Africa, and the natives of Australia and the Pacific islands.

Nor has this making of myths to account for remarkable appearances yet ceased, even in civilized countries.

About the beginning of this century the Grand Duke of Weimar, smitten with the classical mania of his time, placed in the public park near his palace a little altar, and upon this was carved, after the manner so frequent in classical antiquity, a serpent taking a cake from it.

And shortly there appeared, in the town and the country around about, a legend to explain this altar and its decoration. It was commonly said that a huge serpent had laid waste that region in the olden time, until a wise and benevolent baker had rid the world of the monster by means of a poisoned biscuit.

So, too, but a few years since, in the heart of the State of New York, a swindler of genius having made and buried a "petrified giant," one theologian explained it by declaring it a Phœnician idol, and published the Phœnician inscription which he thought he had found upon it; others saw in it proofs that "there were giants in those days," and within a week after its discovery myths were afloat that the neighboring remnant of the Onondaga Indians had traditions of giants who frequently roamed through that region.*

* For transformation myths and legends, identifying rocks and stones with gods and heroes, see Welcker, "Götterlehre," pp. 218 *et seq.* For recent and more accessible statements for the general reader, see Robertson Smith's admirable "Lectures on the Religion of the Semites," Edinburgh, 1889, pp. 86 *et seq.* For some thoughtful remarks on the ancient adoration of stones rather than statues, with reference to the anointing of the stones at Bethel by Jacob, see Dodwell, "Tour through Greece," vol. ii, p. 172; also Robertson Smith as above, Lecture V. For Chinese transformation legends, see Denny's "Folklore of China," pp. 96 and 128. For Hindu and other ancient legends of transformations, see Dawson, "Dictionary of Hindu Mythology," also Coleman as above, also Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," pp. 81-97, etc. For such transformations in Greece, see the "Iliad," and Ovid as above; also Stark, "Niobe und die Niobiden," p. 444 and elsewhere; also Preller, "Griechische Mythologie," ii, 383; also Baumeister, "Denkmäler des classischen Alterthums," Art. "Niobe"; also Bötticher as above; also Curtius, "Griechische Geschichte," vol. i, pp. 71, 72. For Pausanias's *naïve* confession regarding the Sipylus rock, see Book I, 215. See also Texier, "Asie Mineure," pp. 265 *et seq.*; also Chandler, "Travels in Greece," vol. ii, p. 80, who seems to hold to the later origin of the statue. At the end of Baumeister there is an engraving copied from Stuart which seems to show that, as to the Niobe legend, at a later period Art was allowed to help Nature. For the general subject, see Scheiffele, "Program des K. Gymnasiums," in Ellwangen, "Mythologische Parallelen," 1865. For Scandinavian and Teutonic transformation legends, see Grimm, "Deutsche Mythologie," vierte Ausg., i,

To the same stage of thought belongs the conception of human beings changed into trees.

But, in the historic evolution of religion and morality, while changes into stone or rock were considered as punishment, or evidence of divine wrath, those into trees and shrubs were frequently looked upon as rewards, or evidences of divine favor.

A very beautiful and touching form of this conception is seen in such myths as the change of Philemon into the oak, and of Baucis into the linden; of Myrrha into the myrtle; of Melos into the apple-tree; of Attys into the pine; of Adonis into the rose-tree; and in the springing of the vine and grape from the blood of the Titans, the violet from the blood of Attys, and the hyacinth from the blood of Hyacinthus.

Thus it was, during the long ages when mankind saw everywhere miracle and nowhere law, that, in the evolution of religion and morality, striking features in physical geography became connected with the idea of divine retribution.*

But, in the natural course of intellectual growth, thinking men began to doubt the historical accuracy of these myths and legends—or, at least, to doubt all save those of the theology in which they happened to be born; and the next step was taken when they began to make comparisons between the myths and legends of different neighborhoods and countries; so came into being the science

457; also Thorpe, "Northern Antiquities"; also Friedrich, *passim*, especially p. 116 *et seq.*; also, for a mass of very curious ones, Karl Bartsch, "Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Mecklenburg," vol. i, p. 420, *et seq.*; also Karl Simrock's edition of the "Edda," ninth edition, p. 319; also John Fiske, "Myths and Myth-Makers," pp. 8 and 9. On the universality of such legends and myths, see Ritter's "Erdkunde," xiv, 1098–1122. For Irish examples, see Manz, "Real Encyclopädie," art. "Stein"; and for multitudes of examples in Brittany, see Sébillot, "Traditions de la Haute-Bretagne." For the enchanted columns at Saloniki, see latest edition of Murray's "Handbook of Turkey," vol. ii, p. 711. For the legend of the angel changed into stone for neglecting to guard Adam, see Weil, university librarian at Heidelberg, "Biblische Legende der Muselmänner," Frankfort-am-Main, 1845, pp. 37 and 84. For similar transformation legends in Australia and among the American Indians, see Andrew Lang, "Mythology," French translation, pp. 83 and 102; also his "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. i, pp. 150 *et seq.*, citing numerous examples from J. G. Müller, "Urreligionen," Dorman's "Primitive Superstitions," and "Report of the Bureau of Ethnology" for 1880–'81; and for an African example, see account of the rock at Balon which was once a woman, in Béranger-Feraud, "Contes populaires de la Sénégambie," chap. viii. For the Weimar legend, see Lewes, "Life of Goethe," Book IV. For the myths which arose about the swindling "Cardiff Giant" in the State of New York, see especially an article by G. A. Stockwell, M. D., in "The Popular Science Monthly" for June, 1878; and for the "Phœnician inscription," given at length with a translation, see the Rev. Alexander McWhorter, in "The Galaxy" for July, 1872. The present writer has in his possession a mass of curious documents regarding this fraud and the myths to which it gave rise, and hopes ere long to prepare a supplement to Dr. Stockwell's valuable paper.

* For the view taken in Greece and Rome of transformations into trees and shrubs, see Bötticher, "Baumcultur der Alten," xix, pp. 2 and 3; also Ovid, "Metamorphoses," *passim*; also foregoing notes.

of Comparative Mythology—a science sure to be of vast value, because, despite many stumblings and vagaries, it shows ever more and more how our religion and morality have been gradually evolved, and gives a firm basis to faith that higher planes may yet be reached.

Such a science makes the sacred books of the world more and more precious, in that it shows how they have been the necessary envelopes of our highest spiritual sustenance; how even myths and legends apparently the most puerile have been the natural husks and rinds and shells of our best ideas; and how the atmosphere is created in which these husks and rinds and shells in due time wither, shrivel, and fall away, so that the fruit itself may be gathered to sustain a nobler religion and a purer morality.

The coming in of Christianity contributed elements of inestimable value in this evolution, and, at the center of all, the thoughts, words, and life of the Master. But when, in the darkness that followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, there was developed a theology and a vast ecclesiastical power to enforce it, the most interesting chapters in this evolution of religion and morality were unfortunately removed from the domain of science.

So it came that for over eighteen hundred years it has been thought natural and right to study and compare the myths and legends arising east and west and south and north of Palestine with each other, but never with those of Palestine itself; so it came that one of the regions most fruitful in materials for reverent thought and healthful comparison was held exempt from the unbiased search for truth; so it came that, in the name of truth, truth was crippled for ages. While observation, and thought upon observation, and the organized knowledge or science which results from these, progressed as regarded the myths and legends of other countries, and an atmosphere was thus produced giving purer conceptions of the world and its government; myths of that little geographical region at the eastern end of the Mediterranean retained possession of the civilized world in their original crude form, and have at times done much to thwart the noblest efforts of religion, morality, and civilization.

The history of myths—of their growth under the earlier phases of human thought and of their decline under modern thinking—is one of the most interesting and suggestive of human studies; but, since to treat it as a whole would require volumes, I shall select only one small group, and out of this mainly a single myth—one about which there can no longer be any dispute—the group of myths and legends which grew upon the shore of the Dead Sea, and especially that one which grew up to account for the successive salt columns at its southwestern extremity.

The Dead Sea is about thirty-nine geographical miles in

length and nine miles in width; it lies in a very deep fissure extending north and south, and its surface is about thirteen hundred feet below that of the Mediterranean. It has, therefore, no outlet, and is the receptacle for the waters of the whole system to which it belongs, including those collected by the Sea of Galilee and brought down thence by the river Jordan.

It certainly—or, at least, the larger part of it—ranks geologically among the oldest lakes on earth. In a broad sense the region is volcanic: on its shore are evidences of volcanic action which must, from the earliest period, have aroused wonder and fear, and stimulated the myth-making tendency to account for them. On the eastern side are impressive mountain-masses which have been thrown up from old volcanic vents; mineral and hot springs abound, some of them spreading sulphurous odors; earthquakes have been frequent, and from time to time these cast up masses of bitumen; concretions of sulphur and large formations of salt constantly appear.

The water which comes from the springs or oozes through the salt layers upon its shores constantly brings in various salts in solution, and, being rapidly evaporated under the hot sun and dry wind, there has been left, in the bed of the lake, a strong brine heavily charged with the usual chlorides and bromides—a sort of bitter “mother liquor.” This fluid has become so dense as to have a remarkable power of supporting the human body; is of an acrid and nauseating bitterness; and by ordinary eyes no evidence of life is seen in it.

Thus it was that in the lake itself, and in its surrounding shores, there was enough to make the generation of explanatory myths on a large scale inevitable.

The main northern part of the lake is very deep, the plummet having shown an abyss of thirteen hundred feet, but the southern end is shallow and in places marshy.

The system of which it forms a part shows a likeness to that in South America, of which the mountain lake Titicaca is the main feature; as a receptacle for surplus waters, only rendering them by evaporation, it resembles the Caspian and many other seas; as a sort of evaporating dish for the leachings of salt rock, and consequently holding a body of water unfit to support the higher forms of animal life, it resembles, among others, the Median lake of Urumiah; as a deposit of bitumen, it resembles the pitch lakes of Trinidad.

Striking, then, as was the Dead Sea in its appearance to pre-scientific man, there is nothing in it of extraordinary difficulty to the modern geologist or geographer.*

* For modern views of the Dead Sea, see the Rev. Edward Robinson, D. D., “Biblical Researches,” various editions; Lynch’s “Exploring Expedition”; De Sauley, “Voyage

At a very early period, myths and legends, many and long, grew up to explain features then so incomprehensible.

As the myth and legend grew up among the Greeks of a refusal of hospitality to Zeus and Hermes by the village in Phrygia, and the consequent sinking of that beautiful region with its inhabitants beneath a lake and morass, so there came a belief in a similar offense by the people of the beautiful valley of Siddim, and the consequent sinking of that valley with its inhabitants beneath the waters of the Dead Sea. Very similar to the accounts of the saving of Philemon and Baucis are those of the saving of Lot and his family.

But the myth-making and miracle-mongering by no means ceased in ancient times; they continued to grow through the me-

antour de la Mer Morte"; Stanley's "Palestine and Syria"; Schaff's "Through Bible Lands"; and other travelers hereafter quoted. For good "*photogravures*," showing the character of the whole region, see the portfolio forming part of De Luynes's monumental "Voyage d'Exploration." For geographical summaries, see Reclus, "La Terre," Paris, 1870, pp. 832-843; Ritter, "Erdkunde," volumes devoted to Palestine and especially as supplemented in Gage's translation with additions; Reclus, "Nouvelle Géographie Universelle," ix, 736, where a small map is given presenting difference in depth between the two ends of the lake, of which so much was made theologically before Lartet. For still better maps, see De Saulcy, and especially De Luynes, "Voyage d'Exploration" (portfolio). For very interesting panoramic views, see last edition of Canon Tristram's "Land of Israel," p. 635. For the geology, see Lartet, in his reports to the French Geographical Society, and especially in vol. iii of De Luynes's work, where there is an admirable geological map with sections, etc.; also Ritter; also Sir J. W. Dawson's "Egypt and Syria," published by the Religious Tract Society; also Rev. Cunningham Geikie, D. D., "Geology of Palestine"; and for pictures showing salt formation, Tristram, as above. For the meteorology, see Vignes, "Report to De Luynes," pp. 65 *et seq.* For chemistry of the Dead Sea, see as above, and Terrell's report, given in Gage's Ritter, vol. iii, Appendix 2, and tables in De Luynes's third volume. For zoölogy of the Dead Sea, as to entire absence of life in it, see all earlier travelers; as to presence of lower forms of life, see Ehrenberg's microscopic examinations in Gage's Ritter. See also reports in third volume of De Luynes. For botany of the Dead Sea, and especially regarding "apples of Sodom," see Dr. Lortet's "Palestine," p. 412; also Reclus, "Nouvelle Géographie," ix, 737. Also for photographic representations of them, see portfolio forming part of De Luynes's work, plate 27. On Strabo's very perfect description, etc., see lib. xvi, II, 44; also Fallmerayer, "Werke," pp. 177, 178. For names and positions of a large number of salt lakes in various parts of the world more or less resembling the Dead Sea, see De Luynes, iii, 242 *et seq.* For Trinidad "pitch-lakes," found by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1595, see Langeegg, "El Dorado," Part I, p. 103, and Part II, p. 101; also Reclus, Ritter, *et al.* For the general subject, see Schenkel, "Bible Lexicon," *sub voc.* "Todtes Meer," an excellent summary. The description of the Dead Sea in Lenormant's great history is utterly unworthy of him, and must have been thrown together from old notes after his death. It is amazing to see in such a work the old superstition that birds attempting to fly over the sea are suffocated. See Lenormant, "Histoire ancienne de l'Orient," edition of 1888, vol. vi, p. 112. For the absorption and adoption of foreign myths and legends by the Jews, see Baring-Gould, "Myths," etc., p. 390. For the views of Greeks and Romans, see especially Tacitus, "History," Book V, Pliny, and Strabo, in whose remarks are the germs of many of the mediæval myths. For very curious examples of these, see Baierus, "De Excidio Sodomæ," Halle, 1705, *passim*.

diæval and modern period until they have quietly withered away in the light of modern scientific investigation, leaving to us the religious and moral truths they inclose.

It would be interesting to trace this whole group of myths: their origin in times prehistoric; their development in Greece and Rome; their culmination during the ages of faith; and their disappearance in the age of science. It would be especially instructive to note the conscientious efforts to prolong their life by making futile compromises between science and theology regarding them; but I shall mention this main group only incidentally, confining myself almost entirely to the one above named—the most remarkable of all—the myth which grew about the salt pillars of Usdum.

I select this mainly because it involves only elementary principles, requires no abstruse reasoning, and because all controversy regarding it is ended. There is certainly now no theologian with a reputation to lose who will venture to revive the idea regarding it which was sanctioned for hundreds, nay thousands, of years by theology, was based on Scripture, and was held by the universal Church until our own century.

The main feature of the salt region of Usdum is a low range of hills near the southwest corner of the Dead Sea, extending in a southeasterly direction for about five miles; and made up mainly of salt rock. This rock is soft and friable, and, under the influence of the heavy winter rains, it has been, without doubt, from a period long before human history, as it is now, cut ever into new shapes, and especially into pillars or columns, which sometimes bear a resemblance to the human form.

A clergyman who visited this spot about ten years since speaks of the appearance of this salt range as follows:

"Fretted by fitful showers and storms, its ridge is exceedingly uneven, its sides carved out and constantly changing; . . . and each traveler might have a new pillar of salt to wonder over at intervals of a few years."*

Few things could be more certain than that, in the indolent

* As to the substance of the "pillars" or "statues" or "needles" of salt at Usdum, many travelers speak of it as "marl and salt." Irby and Mangles, in their "Travels in Egypt, Nubia, Syria, and the Holy Land," chapter vii, call it "salt and hardened sand." The citation as to frequent carving out of new "pillars" is from the "Travels in Palestine" of the Rev. H. F. Osborn, D. D. See also Palmer, "Desert of the Exodus," ii, pp. 478, 479. For engravings of the salt pillar at different times compare that given by Lynch in 1848, when it appeared as a column forty feet high, with that given by Palmer as the frontispiece to his "Desert of the Exodus," Cambridge, England, 1871, when it was small and "does really bear a curious resemblance to an Arab woman with a child upon her shoulders"; and this again with the picture of the salt formation at Usdum given by Canon Tristram, at whose visit there was neither "pillar" nor "statue." See "The Land of Israel," by H. B. Tristram, D. D., F. R. S., London, 1882, p. 324.

dream-life of the East, myths and legends would grow up to account for this as for other strange appearances in all that region. The question which a religious Oriental put to himself in ancient times at Usdum was substantially that which his descendant to-day puts to himself at Kosseir: "Why is this region thus blasted?"—"whence these pillars of salt?" or "whence these blocks of granite?"—"what aroused the vengeance of Jehovah or of Allah to work these miracles of desolation?"

And, just as Maxime Du Camp recorded the answer of the modern Shemite at Kosseir, so the compilers of the Jewish sacred books recorded the answer of the ancient Shemite at the Dead Sea; just as Allah at Kosseir blasted the land and transformed the melons into bowlders which are seen to this day, so Jehovah at Usdum blasted the land and transformed Lot's wife into a pillar of salt which is seen to this day.

No more difficulty was encountered in the formation of the Lot legend, to account for that rock resembling the human form, than in the formation of the Niobe legend, which accounted for a supposed human resemblance in the rock at Sipylos; it grew up just as we have seen thousands of similar myths and legends grow up about striking natural appearances in every home of the human race. Being thus consonant with the universal view regarding the relation of physical geography to the divine government, it became a treasure of the Jewish nation and of the Christian Church—a treasure not only to be guarded against all hostile intrusion, but to be increased, as we shall see, by the myth-making powers of Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans for thousands of years.

The spot where the myth originated was carefully kept in mind; indeed, it could not escape, for in that place alone was constantly seen the phenomena which caused the myth. We have a steady chain of testimony through the ages all pointing to the salt pillar as the irrefragable evidence of divine judgment. That great theological test of truth—the dictum of St. Vincent of Lerins—would certainly prove that the pillar was Lot's wife; for it was believed so to be by Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans from the earliest period down to a time almost within present memory—"always, everywhere, and by all." It would stand perfectly the ancient test insisted upon by Cardinal Newman, "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*"

For, ever since the earliest days of Christianity, the identity of the salt pillar with Lot's wife has been universally held and supported by passages in Genesis, in St. Luke's Gospel, and in the Second Epistle of St. Peter—coupled with a passage in the book of the Wisdom of Solomon, which to this day, by a majority in the Christian Church, is believed to be inspired, and from which are

specially cited the words, "A standing pillar of salt is a monument of an unbelieving soul."*

Never was chain of belief more continuous. In the first century of the Christian era Josephus refers to the miracle, and declares regarding the statue, "I have seen it, and it remains at this day"; and Clement, Bishop of Rome, one of the most revered fathers of the Church, noted for the moderation of his statements, expresses a similar certainty, declaring that he knew the miraculous statue to be still standing.

In the second century that great father of the Church, bishop and martyr, Irenæus, not only vouched for it, but gave his approval to the belief that the soul of Lot's wife still lingered in the statue, giving it a sort of organic life; thus virtually began in the Church that amazing development of the legend which we shall see taking various forms through the middle ages—the story that the salt statue exercised certain physical functions which in these more delicate days can not be alluded to save under cover of a learned language.

This addition to the legend, which in these signs of life, as in other things, is developed almost exactly on the same lines with the legend of the Niobe statue in the rock of Mount Sipylus and the legends of human beings transformed into bowlders in various mythologies, was for centuries regarded as an additional confirmation of revealed truth.

In the third century the myth burst into still richer bloom in a poem long ascribed to Tertullian. In this poem more miraculous characteristics of the statue are revealed. It could not be washed away by rains; it could not be overthrown by winds; any wound made upon it was miraculously healed; and the earlier statements as to its physical functions were amplified in sonorous Latin verse.

With this appeared a new legend regarding the Dead Sea: it became universally believed, and we find it repeated throughout the whole mediæval period, that the bitumen could only be dissolved by such fluids as in the processes of animated nature came from the statue.

The legend thus amplified we shall find dwelt upon by pious travelers and monkish chroniclers for hundreds of years: so it came to be more and more treasured by the universal Church, and held more and more firmly—"always, everywhere, and by all."

In the two following centuries we have an overwhelming mass of additional authority for the belief that the very statue of salt

* For the usual biblical citations, see Genesis xix, 26; St. Luke xvii, 32; Second Peter ii, 6. For the citation from "Wisdom," see x, 7. For the account of the transformation of Lot's wife put into its proper relations with the Jehovistic and Elohist documents, see Lenormant's "*La Genèse*," Paris, 1883, pp. 53, 199, and 317, 318.

into which Lot's wife was transformed was still existing. In the fourth the continuance of the statue was vouched for by St. Silvia, who visited the place: though she could not see it, she was told by the Bishop of Segor that it had been there some time before, and she concluded that it had been temporarily covered by the sea. In both the fourth and fifth centuries such great doctors in the Church as St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem agreed in this belief and statement; hence it was, doubtless, that the Hebrew word which is translated in the authorized English version "pillar," was translated in the Vulgate, which the vast majority of Christians believe divinely inspired, by the word "statue"; we shall find this fact insisted upon by theologians arguing in behalf of the statue, as a result and monument of the miracle, for over fourteen hundred years afterward.*

About the middle of the sixth century Antoninus Martyr visited the Dead Sea region and described it, but curiously reversed a simple truth in these words: "Nor do sticks or straws float there, nor can a man swim, but whatever is cast into it sinks to the bottom." As to the statue of Lot's wife, he threw doubt upon its miraculous renewal, but testified that it was still standing.

In the seventh century the Targum of Jerusalem not only testified that the salt pillar at Usdum was once Lot's wife, but declared that she must retain that form until the general resurrection. In the seventh century, too, Bishop Arculf traveled to the Dead Sea, and his work was added to the treasures of the Church. He develops the legend, and especially that part of it given by Josephus, greatly. The bitumen that floats upon the sea "resembles gold and the form of a bull or camel"; "birds can not live near it"; and "the very beautiful apples" which grow there, when plucked, "burn and are reduced to ashes, and smoke as if they were still burning."

In the eighth century the Venerable Bede takes these statements of Arculf and his predecessors, binds them together in his work on "The Holy Places," and gives the whole mass of myths and legends an enormous impulse.†

In the tenth century new force is given to it by the pious Mos-

* See Josephus, "Antiquities," 1, 1, chap. ii; Clement, "Epist.," 1; Cyril, "Hieros. Catech.," xix; Chrysostom, "Hom.," xviii, xlv in Genes.; Irenæus, lib. iv, c. xxxi, or cap. i, p. 354, edition Oxon., 1702. For St. Silvia, see "S. Silvæ Aquitanæ Peregrinatio ad Loca Sancta," Romæ, 1887, p. 55, also edition of 1885, p. 25. For legends of signs of continued life in bowlders and stones into which human beings have been transformed for sin, see Karl Bartsch, "Sagen," etc., vol. ii, pp. 420 *et seq.*

† For Antoninus Martyr, see Tobler's edition of his work in the "Itinera," i, p. 100, Geneva, 1877. For the Targum of Jerusalem, see citat. in Quaresmius, "Terræ Sanctæ Elucidatio," Peregrinatio vi, cap. xiv; new Venice edition. For Arculf, see Tobler. For

For a recent translation see Algrima's of St

lem, Mukadassi. Speaking of the town of Segor, near the salt region, he says that the proper translation of its name is "Hell"; and of the lake he says, "Its waters are hot, even as though the place stood over hell-fire."

In the crusading period, immediately following, all the legends burst forth more brilliantly than ever.

The first of these new travelers who makes careful statements is Fulk of Chartres, who in 1100 accompanied King Baldwin to the Dead Sea and saw many wonders; but, though he visited the salt region of Usdum, he makes no mention of the salt pillar: evidently he had fallen on evil times; the older statues had probably been washed away, and no new one had happened to be washed out of the rocks just at that period.

But his misfortune was more than made up by the triumphant experience of a far more famous traveler, half a century later—Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela.

Rabbi Benjamin finds new evidences of miracle in the Dead Sea, and develops to a still higher point the myth and legend of the salt statue of Lot's wife, enriching the world with the statement that it was steadily and miraculously renewed; that, though the cattle of the region licked its surface, it never grew smaller. Again a thrill of joy went through the monasteries and pulpits of Christendom at this increasing "evidence of the truth of Scripture."

Toward the end of the thirteenth century there appeared in Palestine a traveler superior to most before or since—Count Burchard, monk of Mount Sion. He had the advantage of knowing something of Arabic, and his writings show him to have been observant and thoughtful. No statue of Lot's wife appears to have been washed clean of the salt rock during his visit, but he takes it for granted that the Dead Sea is "the mouth of hell," and that the vapor rising from it is the smoke from Satan's furnaces.

These ideas seem to have become part of the common stock, for Ernoul, who traveled to the Dead Sea during the same century, always speaks of it as the "Sea of Devils."

Near the beginning of the fourteenth century came a traveler of far wider influence—Sir John Maundeville.

In the various editions of the book ascribed to him, myths and legends of the Dead Sea and of the pillar of salt—old and new—burst forth into wonderful luxuriance. He brings news of a woman changed into an enormous dragon; of a monster who besought a monk to cast out the devil from him, and who had horns on his head, which horns were shown Maundeville by the monk

Bede, see his "*De Locis Sanctis*" in Tobler's "*Itinera*," i, p. 228. For an admirable statement of the mediæval theological view of scientific research, see Eicken, "*Geschichte, etc., der Mittelalterlichen Weltanschauung*," Stuttgart, 1887, chap. vi.

who told him the story. He gives full details of the phoenix rising from its own ashes. But all culminates at the Dead Sea.

He tells us that masses of fiery matter are every day thrown up from it as large as a horse; that, though it contains no living thing, it has been shown that men thrown into it can not die; and finally, as if to prove the worthlessness of devout testimony to the miraculous, he says: "And whoever throws a piece of iron therein, it floats; and whoever throws a feather therein, it sinks to the bottom; and, because that is contrary to nature, I was not willing to believe it until I saw it."

He of course mentions Lot's wife, and says that the pillar of salt "stands there to-day," and "has a right salty taste."

Great injustice has been done to Maundeville in holding him a liar of the first magnitude. Never was man further from the thought of lying. He simply abhorred skepticism, and thought it meritorious to believe all pious legends. The ideal Maundeville was a man of overmastering faith, and resembled Tertullian in believing things "because they are impossible"; he was entirely conscientious; the solemn ending of the book shows that he listened, observed, and wrote under the deepest conviction, and those who re-edited his book were probably just as honest in adding the later stories of pious travelers.

The "Travels of Sir John Maundeville," thus appealing to the popular heart, were most widely read in the monasteries and repeated among the people. Innumerable copies were made in manuscript, and finally in print, and so the old myths received a new life.*

In the fifteenth century wonders were increased. In 1418 we have the Lord of Caumont, who makes a pilgrimage and gives us

* For Fulk of Chartres and Crusading travelers generally, see Bongar's "*Gesta Dei per Francos*," *passim*; also histories of the Crusades by Wilkins, Poujoulat, and others. See also Robinson, "*Biblical Researches*," ii, 109, and Tobler, "*Bibliographia Geographica Palestinae*," 1867, p. 12. For Benjamin of Tudela's statement, see Wright's "Collection of Travels in Palestine," p. 84, and Asher's edition of Benjamin of Tudela's travels, vol i, pp. 71, 72; also Charton, vol. i, p. 180. For Borchard or Burchard, see full text in the "*Reyssebuch dess Heyligen Landes*"; also Grynæus, "*Nov. Orbis*," Basil, 1532, folio 298, 329. For Ernoul, see his "*L'Estat de la Cité de Hierusalem*," in Michelin and Raynaud, "*Itinéraires Françaises au 12me et 13me Siècles*." For Petrus Diaconus, see "*Petri Diaconi de Locis sanctis*," edited by Gamurrini, Rome, 1887, pp. 126, 127. For Maundeville I have compared several editions, especially those in the "*Reyssebuch*," in Canisius and in Wright, with Halliwell's reprint and with the rare Strasburg edition of 1484 in the Cornell University Library: the whole statement regarding the experiment with iron and feathers is given differently in different copies. The statement that he saw the feathers sink and the iron swim is made in the *Reyssebuch* edition, Frankfort, 1584. The story, like the saints' legends, evidently grew as time went on, but is none the less interesting as showing the general credulity. Since writing the above I have been glad to find my view of Maundeville's honesty confirmed by the Rev. Dr. Robinson, and by Mr. Gage in his edition of Ritter's "*Palestine*."

a statement which is the result of the theological reasoning of centuries, and especially interesting as a typical example of the theological method in contrast with the scientific. He could not understand how the blessed waters of the Jordan could be allowed to mingle with the accursed waters of the Dead Sea. In spite, then, of the eye of sense, he beheld the water with the eye of faith, and calmly announced that the Jordan water passes through the sea, but that the two masses of water are not mingled. As to the salt statue of Lot's wife, he declares it to be still existing; and, copying a table of indulgences granted by the Church to pious pilgrims, he puts down the visit to the salt statue as giving an indulgence of seven years.

Toward the end of the century we have another traveler yet more influential, Bernard of Breydenbach, Dean of Mainz. His book of travels was published in 1486, at the famous press of Schoeffer, and in various translations it was spread through Europe, exercising an influence wide and deep. His first important notice of the Dead Sea is as follows: "In this, Tirus the serpent is found, and from him the Tiriatic medicine is made. He is blind, and so full of venom that there is no remedy for his bite except cutting off the bitten part. He can only be taken by striking him and making him angry; then his venom flies into his head and tail." Breydenbach calls the Dead Sea "the chimney of hell," and repeats the old story as to the miraculous solvent for its bitumen. He, too, makes the statement that the holy water of the Jordan does not mingle with the accursed water of the infernal sea; but increases the miracle which Caumont had announced by saying that, although the waters appear to come together, the Jordan is really absorbed in the earth before it reaches the sea.

As to Lot's wife, various travelers at that time had various fortunes. Some, like Caumont and Breydenbach, took her continued existence for granted; some, like Count John of Solms, saw her and were greatly edified; some, like Hans Werli, tried to find her and could not, but, like St. Silvia, a thousand years before, were none the less edified by the idea that, for some inscrutable purpose, the sea had been allowed to hide her from them; some found her larger than they expected, even forty feet high, as was the salt pillar which happened to be standing at the visit of Commander Lynch in 1848; but this only added a new proof to the miracle, for the text was remembered, "There were giants in those days."

Out of the mass of works of pilgrims during the fifteenth century I select just one more as typical of the theological view then dominant, and this is the noted book of Felix Fabri, a preaching friar of Ulm.

I select him, because even so eminent an authority in our own time as Dr. Edward Robinson declares him to have been the most thorough, thoughtful, and enlightened traveler of that century.

Fabri is greatly impressed by the wonders of the Dead Sea, and typical of his honesty influenced by faith is his account of the Dead Sea fruit; he describes it with almost perfect accuracy, but adds the statement that when mature it is "filled with ashes and cinders."

As to the salt statue, he says: "We saw the place between the sea and Mount Segor, but could not see the statue itself because we were too far distant to see anything of human size; but we saw it with firm faith, because we believed Scripture, which speaks of it; and we were filled with wonder."

To sustain absolute faith in the statue he reminds his readers that "God is able even of these stones to raise up seed to Abraham," and goes into a long argument, discussing such transformations as those of King Atlas and Pygmalion's statue, with a multitude of others, winding up with the case, given in the miracles of St. Jerome, of a heretic who was changed into a log of wood, which was then burned.

He gives a statement of the Hebrews that Lot's wife received her peculiar punishment because she had refused to add salt to the food of the angels when they visited her, and he preaches a short sermon in which he says that, as salt is the condiment of food, so the salt statue of Lot's wife "gives us a condiment of wisdom."*

There were indeed many discrepancies in the testimony of travelers regarding the salt pillar—so many, in fact, that at a later period the learned Dom Calmet acknowledged that they shook his belief in the whole matter; but, during this earlier time, under the complete sway of the theological spirit, these difficulties only gave new and more glorious opportunities for faith.

For, if a considerable interval occurred between the washing of one salt pillar out of existence and the washing of another into existence, the idea arose that the statue, by virtue of the soul which still remained in it, had departed on some mysterious excursion; did it happen that one statue was washed out one year in one place and another statue another year in another place, this difficulty was surmounted by believing that Lot's wife still walked about; did it happen that a salt column was undermined by the rains and fell, this was believed to be but another sign of life; did

* For Bernhard of Breydenbach, see marked pages in the Latin edition, Mentz, 1486, in the White collection, Cornell University, also in German edition in the "Reyssebuch"; for John of Solms, Werli, and the like, see the "Reyssebuch," which gives a full text of their travels. For Fabri (Schmid), see, for his value, Robinson, also Tobler, "Bibliographia," 53 *et seq.*; and for texts the "Reyssebuch," 122b *et seq.*, but best the "Fratris Fel. Fabri Evagatorium," ed. Hassler, Stuttgart, 1843, iii, 172 *et seq.*

a pillar happen to be covered in part by the sea, this was enough to arouse the belief that the statue from time to time descended into the Dead Sea depths—possibly to satisfy that old fatal curiosity regarding her former neighbors; did some smaller block of salt happen to be washed out near the statue, it was believed that a household dog, also transformed into salt, had followed her back from beneath the deep; did more statues than one appear at one time, that simply made the mystery more impressive.

In facts now so easy of scientific explanation the theologians found wonderful food for discussion.

One great question among them was whether the soul of Lot's wife did really remain in the statue. On one side it was insisted that, as Holy Scripture declares that Lot's wife was changed into a pillar of salt, and as she was necessarily made up of a soul and a body, the soul must have become part of the statue. This argument was clinched by citing that passage in the Book of Wisdom in which the salt pillar is declared to be still standing as "the monument of an unbelieving *soul*." On the other hand, it was insisted that the soul of the woman must have been incorporeal and immortal, and hence could not have been changed into a substance corporeal and mortal. Naturally, to this it would be answered that the salt pillar was no more corporeal than the ordinary materials of the human body, and that it had been made miraculously immortal, and that "with God all things are possible." Thus long vistas of theological discussion were opened.*

As we enter the sixteenth century the Dead Sea myths, and especially the legends of Lot's wife, are still growing. In 1507 Father Anselm of the Minorites declares that the sea sometimes covers the feet of the statue, sometimes the legs, sometimes the whole body.

In 1555 Gabriel Giraudet, priest at Puy, journeyed through Palestine. His faith was robust, and his attitude toward the myths of the Dead Sea is seen by his declaration that its waters are so foul that one can smell them at a distance of three leagues; that straw, hay, or feathers thrown into them will sink, but that iron and other metals will float; that criminals have been kept in them three or four days and could not drown. As to Lot's wife, he says that he found her "lying there, her back toward heaven, converted into salt stone; for I touched her, scratched her, and put a piece of her into my mouth, and she tasted salt."

At the center of all these legends we see, then, the idea that, though there were no living beasts in the Dead Sea, the people of the overwhelmed cities were still living beneath its waters, prob-

* For a brief statement of the main arguments for and against the idea that the soul of Lot's wife remained within the salt statue, see Cornelius a Lapide, "Commentarius in Pentateuchum," Antwerp, 1697, chap. xix.

ably in hell; that there was life in the salt statue; and that it was still curious regarding its old neighbors.

Hence such travelers in the latter years of the century as Count Albert of Löwenstein and Prince Nicholas Radzivill are not at all weakened in faith by failing to find the statue; what the former is capable of believing is seen by his statement that in a certain cemetery at Cairo during one night in the year the dead thrust forth their feet, hands, limbs, and even rise wholly from their graves.

There seemed, then, no limit to these pious beliefs. The idea that there is merit in credulity, with the love of myth-making and miracle-mongering, constantly made them larger. Nor did the Protestant Reformation, which now came in, diminish them at first; it rather strengthened them and fixed them more firmly in the popular mind. They seemed destined to last forever. How they were thus strengthened at first, under Protestantism, and how they were finally dissolved away in the atmosphere of scientific thought, will be shown in the following chapter.*

* For Father Anselm, see his "*Descriptio Terræ Sanctæ*," in H. Canisius, "*Thesaurus Monument. Eccles.*," Basnage edition, Amsterdam, 1725, vol. iv, p. 788. For Giraudet, see his "*Discours du Voyage d'Oultre Mer . . . et autres Lieux de la Terre Sainte*," Paris, 1585, p. 56a. For Radziwill and Löwenstein, see the "*Reyssebuch*," especially p. 198a.

PART II.

THE first effect of the Protestant Reformation was to popularize the older Dead Sea legends, and to make the public mind still more receptive for the newer ones.

Luther's great pictorial Bible, so powerful in fixing the ideas of the German people, showed by very striking engravings all three of these earlier myths—the destruction of the cities by fire from heaven, the transformation of Lot's wife, and the vile origin of the hated Moabites and Ammonites; and we find the salt statue, especially, in this and other pictorial Bibles, during generation after generation.

Catholic peoples also held their own in this display of faith. About 1517 François Regnault published at Paris a compilation on Palestine enriched with woodcuts; in this the old Dead Sea legend of the "Serpent Tyrus" reappears embellished, and with it various other new versions of old stories. Five years later Bartholomew de Salignac travels in the Holy Land, vouches for the continued existence of the Lot's wife statue, and gives new life to an old marvel by insisting that the sacred waters of the Jordan are not really poured into the infernal basin of the Dead Sea, but that they are miraculously absorbed by the earth.

These ideas were not confined to the people at large; we trace them among scholars.

In 1581 Bunting, a North German professor and theologian, published his "Itinerary of Holy Scripture," and in this the Dead Sea and Lot legends continue to increase. He tells us that the water of the sea "changes three times every day"; that it "spits forth fire"; that it throws up "on high" great foul masses which "burn like pitch" and "swim about like huge oxen"; that the statue of Lot's wife is still there, and that it shines like salt.

In 1590 Christian Adrichom, a Dutch theologian, published his famous work on sacred geography. He does not insist upon the Dead Sea legends generally, but declares that the statue of Lot's wife is still in existence, and on his map he gives a picture of her standing at Usdum.

Nor was it altogether safe to dissent from such beliefs. Just as, under the papal sway, men of science had been severely punished for wrong views of the physical geography of the earth in general, so, when Calvin decided to burn Servetus, he included in his indictment for heresy a charge that Servetus, in his edition of "Ptolemy," had made unorthodox statements regarding the physical geography of Palestine.*

So, too, Protestants and Catholics vied with each other in the making of new myths. Thus, in his "Most Devout Journey," published in 1608, Jean Zvallart, Mayor of Ath in Hainault, confesses himself troubled by conflicting stories about the salt statue, but declares himself sound in the faith that "some vestige of it still remains," and makes up for his bit of freethinking by adding a new mythical horror to the region—"crocodiles," which, with the serpents and the "foul odor of the sea," prevented his visit to the salt mountains.

In 1615 Father Jean Boucher publishes the first of many editions of his "Sacred Bouquet of the Holy Land." He depicts the horrors of the Dead Sea in a number of striking antitheses, and among these is the statement that it is made of mud rather than of water, that it soils whatever is put into it, and so corrupts the land about it that not a blade of grass grows in all that region.

In the same spirit thirteen years later, the Protestant Christopher Heidmann publishes his "Palæstina," in which he speaks of

* For biblical engravings of Lot's wife transformed into a salt statue, etc., see Luther's Bible, 1534, p. xi; also the pictorial "Electoral Bible"; also Merian's "Icones Biblicæ" of 1625; also the frontispiece of the Luther Bible published at Nuremberg in 1708; also Scheuchzer's "Kupfer Bibel," Augsburg, 1731, Tab. lxxx. For the account of the Dead Sea serpent "Tyrus," etc., see "Le Grand Voyage de Hierusalem," Paris (1517?), p. xxi. For De Salignac's assertion regarding the salt pillar and suggestion regarding the absorption of the Jordan before reaching the Dead Sea, see his "Itinerarium Sacræ Scripturæ," Magdeburg, 1593, §§ 34 and 35. For Bunting, see his "Itinerarium Sacræ Scripturæ," Magdeburg, 1589, pp. 78, 79. For Adrichom's picture of the salt statue, see map, p. 38, and text, p. 205, of his "Theatrum Terræ Sanctæ," 1613. For Calvin and Servetus, see Willis, "Servetus and Calvin," pp. 96 and 307; also the Servetus edition of Ptolemy.

a fluid resembling blood oozing from the rocks about the Dead Sea, and cites authorities to prove that the statue of Lot's wife still exists and gives signs of life.

Yet, as we near the end of the sixteenth century, some evidences of a healthful and fruitful skepticism begin to appear.

The old stream of travelers, commentators, and preachers, accepting tradition and repeating what they have been told, flows on; but here and there we are refreshed by the sight of a man who really begins to think and look for himself.

First among these is the French naturalist Pierre B  lon. As regards the ordinary wonders, he has the simple faith of his time. Among a multitude of similar things, he believed that he saw the stones on which the disciples were sleeping during the prayer of Christ, the stone on which the Lord sat when he raised Lazarus from the dead, the Lord's footprints on the stone from which he ascended into heaven, and, most curious of all, "the stone which the builders rejected." Yet he makes some advance on his predecessors, since he shows in one passage that he had thought out the process by which the simpler myths of Palestine were made. For, between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, he sees a field covered with small pebbles, and of these he says: "The common people tell you that a man was once sowing peas there, when Our Lady passed that way and asked him what he was doing; the man answered, 'I am sowing pebbles,' and straightway all the peas were changed into these little stones."

His ascribing belief in this explanatory transformation-myth to the "common people" marks the faint dawn of a new epoch.

Typical also of this new class is the German botanist Leonhard Ranwolf. He travels through Palestine in 1575, and, though devout and at times credulous, notes comparatively few of the old wonders, while he makes thoughtful and careful mention of things in nature that he really saw; he declines to use the eyes of the monks, and steadily uses his own to good purpose.

As we go on in the seventeenth century, this current of new thought is yet more evident; a habit of observing more carefully and of comparing observations had set in; the great voyages of discovery by Columbus, Vasco Da Gama, Magellan, and others were producing their effect, and this effect was increased by the inductive philosophy of Bacon, the reasonings of Descartes, and the suggestions of Montaigne.

So evident was this current that, as far back as the early days of the century, a great theologian, Quaresmio, of Lodi, had made up his mind to stop it forever. In 1616, therefore, he began his ponderous work entitled "The Historical, Theological, and Moral Explanation of the Holy Land." He labored upon it for nine years, gave nine years more to perfecting it, and then put it

into the hands of the great publishing house of Plantin at Antwerp; they were four years in printing and correcting it, and, when it at last appeared, it seemed certain to establish the theological view of the Holy Land for all time. While taking abundant care of other myths which he believed sanctified by our sacred books, Quaresmio devoted himself at great length to the Dead Sea, but above all to the salt statue, and divides his chapter on it into three parts, each headed by a question: First, "*How was Lot's wife changed into a statue of salt?*" Secondly, "*Where was she thus transformed?*" And, thirdly, "*Does that statue still exist?*" Through each of these divisions he fights to the end against all who are inclined to swerve in the slightest degree from the orthodox opinion. He utterly refuses to compromise with any modern theorists. To all such he says, "The narration of Moses is historical and is to be received in its natural sense, and no right-thinking man will deny this." To those who favored the figurative interpretation he says, "With such reasonings any passage of Scripture can be denied."

As to the spot where the miracle occurred, he discusses four places, but settles upon the point where the picture of the statue is given in Adrichom's map. As to the continued existence of the statue, he plays with the opposing view as a cat fondles a mouse, and then shows that the most revered ancient authorities, venerable men still living, and the Bedouins, all agree that it is still in being. Throughout the whole chapter his thoroughness in scriptural knowledge and his profundity in logic are only excelled by his scorn for those theologians who were willing to yield anything to rationalism.

So powerful was this argument that it seemed to carry everything before it, not merely throughout the Roman obedience, but among the most eminent theologians of Protestantism.

As regards the Roman Church, we may take as a type the missionary priest Eugène Roger, who, shortly after the appearance of Quaresmio's book, published his own travels in Palestine. He was an observant man, and his work counts among those of real value; but the spirit of Quaresmio had taken possession of him fully. His work is prefaced with a map showing the points of most importance in scriptural history, and among these he identifies the place where Samson slew the thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, and where he hid the gates of Gaza; the cavern which Adam and Eve inhabited after their expulsion from paradise; the spot where Balaam's ass spoke; the tree on which Absalom was hanged; the place where Jacob wrestled with the angel; the steep place where the swine possessed of devils plunged into the sea; the spot where the prophet Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire; and, of course, the position of the salt statue

which was once Lot's wife. He not only indicates places on land, but places in the sea; thus he shows where Jonah was swallowed by the whale, and "where St. Peter caught one hundred and fifty-three fishes."

As to the Dead Sea miracles generally, he does not dwell on them at great length; he evidently felt that Quaresmio had exhausted the subject, but he shows largely the fruits of Quaresmio's teaching in other matters. He sees, describes, and reasons with great theological acuteness upon the basilisk. The animal is about a foot and a half long, shaped like a crocodile, and kills people with its glance. The one which he saw was dead, fortunately for him, for in the time of Pope Leo IV, as he tells us, one appeared at Rome and killed many people by merely looking at them, but the Pope destroyed it with his prayers and the sign of the cross. He says that Providence has wisely and mercifully protected man by requiring the monster to cry aloud two or three times whenever he leaves his cavern, and the divine wisdom has also made it necessary that the monster should look his victim in the eye, and at a certain distance, in order that his glance may penetrate the victim's eye, and so pass at once to his heart. He also gives reason for supposing that the same divine mercy has provided that the crowing of a cock will kill a basilisk.

But even in this good and credulous missionary we see the influence of Bacon and the dawn of experimental science; for, having been told many stories regarding the salamander, he secured one, placed it alive upon the coals, and reports to us that the legends regarding its power to live in the fire are untrue. He also tried experiments with the chameleon, and found that the stories told regarding it were to be received with much allowance; but, while he uses his mind in these things after the modern method, he locks up his judgment when he discusses the letter of Scripture. A curious example of this we find in his reference to the famous text, in the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, which led the mediæval map-makers to place Jerusalem at the center of the earth. Coupling with this a text from Isaiah, he, by a theological argument, satisfies himself that the exact center of the earth is a certain spot marked on the pavement of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: by a similar process of theological reasoning he also proves that the place where the Holy Cross stood was the identical spot first occupied by the tree which bore the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.

So, too, we find the thoughts and words of Quaresmio echoing afar through the German universities, in public disquisitions, dissertations, and sermons. The great Bible commentators, both Catholic and Protestant, generally agreed in accepting them.

But, strong as this theological theory was, we find that, as

time went on, it required to be braced somewhat, and in 1692 Wedelius, Professor of Medicine at Jena, chose as the subject of his inaugural address "The Physiology of the Destruction of Sodom and of the Statue of Salt."

It is a masterly example of "sanctified science." At great length he dwells on the characteristics of sulphur, salt, and thunderbolts; mixes up scriptural texts, theology, and chemistry after a most bewildering fashion; and finally comes to the conclusion that a thunderbolt, flung by the Almighty, calcined the body of Lot's wife, and at the same time vitrified its particles into a glassy mass looking like salt.*

By such demonstrations as these of Quaresmio and Wedelius the theological view of the myth seemed fastened upon the world forever.

Not only was this view demonstrated, so far as theologico-scientific reasoning could demonstrate anything, but it was clearly shown, by a continuous chain of testimony from the earliest ages, that the salt statue at Usdum had been recognized as the body of Lot's wife by Jews, Mohammedans, and the universal Christian Church, "always, everywhere, and by all."

Under the influence of teachings like these—and of the winter rains—new wonders began to appear at the salt pillar. In 1661 the Franciscan monk Zwinner published his travels in Palestine, and gave not only all the old myths regarding the salt statue, but a new one, in some respects more striking than any of the old—for he had heard that a dog, also transformed into salt, was standing by the side of Lot's wife.

Even the more solid Benedictine scholars were carried away, and we find in the "Sacred History" by Prof. Metzger, of the Order

* For Zvallart, see his "Très dévot Voyage à Ierusalem," Antwerp, 1608, book iv, chapter viii. His journey was made twenty years before. For Father Boucher, see his "Bouquet de la Terre Sainte," Paris, 1622, pp. 447, 448. For Heidmann, see his "Palästina," 1689, pp. 58-62. For Bélon's credulity in matters referred to, see his "Observations de Plusieurs Singularitez," etc., Paris, 1553, pp. 141-144; and for the legend of the peas changed into pebbles, p. 145; see, also, Lartet in "De Luyne," iii, p. 11. For Rauwolf, see the "Reyssebuch," and Tobler, "Bibliographia." For a good account of the influence of Montaigne in developing French skepticism, see Prévost-Paradol's study on Montaigne prefixed to the Le Clerc edition of the "Essays," Paris, 1865; also the well-known passages in Lecky's "Rationalism in Europe." For Quaresmio I have consulted both the Plantin edition of 1639 and the superb new Venice edition of 1880-'82. The latter, though less prized by book fanciers, is the more valuable, since it contains some very interesting recent notes. For the above discussion see Plantin edition, vol. ii, pp. 758 *et seq.*, and Venice edition, vol. ii, pp. 572-574. As to the effect of Quaresmio on the Protestant Church, for Wedelius, see his "De Statua Salis," Jenæ, 1692, pp. 6, 7, and elsewhere. For Eugène Roger, see his "La Terre Sainte," Paris, 1664; the map showing various sites referred to is in the preface; and for basilisks, salamanders, etc., see pp. 89-92, 139, 218, and elsewhere. For thorough discussion of the Old Testament and mediæval view of Jerusalem as the center of the earth, see Eicken, "Geschichte und System der Mittelalterlicher Weltanschauung," Stuttgart, 1887, p. 622. See, also, on next page, legend that the grave of Adam was on Mount Calvary.

of St. Benedict, published in 1700, a renewal of the declaration that the salt statue must be a "*perpetual* memorial."

But it was soon evident that the scientific current was still working beneath this ponderous mass of theological authority. A typical evidence of this we find in 1666 in the travels of Doubdan, a canon of St. Denis. As to the Dead Sea, he says that he saw no smoke, no clouds, and no "black, sticky water"; as to the statue of Lot's wife, he says, "The moderns do not believe so easily that she has lasted so long"; then, as if alarmed at his own boldness, he concedes that the sea *may* be black and sticky *in the middle*; and from Lot's wife he escapes under cover of some pious generalities. Four years later another French ecclesiastic, Jacques Goujon, referring in his published travels to the legend of the salt pillar, says: "People may believe these stories as much as they choose; I did not see it, nor did I go there." So, too, in 1697, Morison, a dignitary of the French church, having traveled in Palestine, confesses that, as to the story of the pillar of salt, he has difficulty in believing it.

The same current is observed working still more strongly in the travels of the Rev. Henry Maundrell, an English chaplain at Aleppo, who traveled through Palestine during the same year. He pours contempt over the legends of the Dead Sea in general: as to the story that birds could not fly over it, he says that he saw them flying there; as to the utter absence of life in the sea, he saw small shells in it; he sees no traces of any buried cities; and, as to the stories regarding the statue of Lot's wife and the proposal to visit it, he says, "Nor could we give faith enough to these reports to induce us to go on such an errand."

The influence of the Baconian philosophy on his mind is very clear; for, in expressing his disbelief in the Dead Sea apples, with their contents of ashes, he says that he saw none, and he cites Lord Bacon in support of skepticism on this and similar points.

But the strongest effect of this growing skepticism is seen near the end of that century, when the eminent Dutch commentator Clericus published his commentary on the Pentateuch and his "Dissertation on the Statue of Salt."

At great length he brings all his shrewdness and learning to bear against the whole legend of the actual transformation of Lot's wife and the existence of the salt pillar, and ends by saying that "the whole story is due to the vanity of some and the credulity of more."

In the beginning of the eighteenth century we find new tributaries to this rivulet of scientific thought. In 1701 Father Félix Beaugrand dismisses the Dead Sea legends and the salt statue very curtly and dryly—expressing not his belief in it, but a conventional wish to believe.

In 1709 a scholar appeared in another part of Europe and of different faith, who did far more than any of his predecessors to envelop the Dead Sea legends in an atmosphere of truth—Adrian Reland, professor at the University of Utrecht. His work on Palestine is a monument of patient scholarship, having as its nucleus a love of truth as truth: there is no irreverence in him, but he quietly brushes away a great mass of myths and legends: as to the statue of Lot's wife, he does not deign to treat it at length, but incidentally applies the comparative method to it with killing effect, for he shows that the story of its miraculous renewal is but one among many of its kind.*

Yet to superficial observers the old current of myth and marvel seemed to flow into the eighteenth century as strong as ever, and of this we may take two typical evidences. The first of these is the "Pious Pilgrimage" of Vincent Briemle. His journey was made about 1710; and his work, brought out under the auspices of a high papal functionary some years later, in a heavy quarto, gave new life to the stories of the hellish character of the Dead Sea, and especially to the miraculous renewal of the salt statue.

In 1720 came a still more striking effort to maintain the old belief on the Protestant side, for, in that year the eminent theologian Masius published his great treatise on "The Conversion of Lot's Wife into a Statue of Salt."

He evidently intended that this work should be the last word on this subject among Protestants, as Quaresmio had imagined that his work would be the last among Catholics. He develops his subject after the high scholastic and theologic manner. Calling attention first to the divine command in the New Testament, "Remember Lot's wife," he argues through a long series of chapters. In the ninth of these he discusses "the *impelling cause*" of her looking back, and introduces us to the question, formerly so often discussed by theologians, whether the soul of Lot's wife was finally saved. Here we are glad to learn that the big, warm heart of Luther lifted him above the common herd of theologians, and led him to declare that she was "a faithful and saintly woman," and that she certainly was not eternally damned. In justice to the Roman Church also it should be said that several of her most

* For Zwinner, see his "Blumenbuch des Heyligen Landes," München, 1661, p. 454. For Mezger, his "Sacra Historia," Augsburg, 1700, p. 30. For Doubdan, see his "Voyage de la Terre Sainte," Paris, 1666, pp. 338, 339; also Tobler and Gage's "Ritter." For Goujon, his "Histoire et Voiage de la Terre Sainte," Lyons, 1670, p. 230, etc. For Morison, see his "Voyage," book ii, pp. 516, 517. For Maundrell, see in Wright's "Collection," pp. 383 *et seq.* For Clerieus, see his "Dissertatio de Salis Statua," in his "Pentateuch," edition of 1696, pp. 327 *et seq.* For Father Beaugrand, see his "Voyage," Paris, 1701, pp. 137 *et seq.* For Reland, see his "Palæstina," Traject. Batavorum, 1714, vol. i., pp. 61-254, and *passim*.

eminent commentators took a similar view, and insisted that the sin of Lot's wife was venial, and therefore, at the worst, could only subject her to the fires of purgatory.

The eleventh chapter discusses at length the question *how* she was converted into salt, and, mentioning many theological opinions, dwells especially upon the view of Rivetus—that a thunder-bolt, made up apparently of fire, sulphur, and salt, wrought her transformation at the same time that it blasted the land; and he bases this opinion upon the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy and the one hundred and seventh Psalm.

Later, there is presented a sacred scientific theory that "saline particles entered into her until her whole body was infected"; and with this Masius connects another piece of sanctified science, to the effect that "stagnant bile" may have rendered the surface of her body "entirely shining, bitter, dry, and deformed."

Finally, in the fourth division of the second section, he comes to the great question whether the salt pillar is still in existence. On this he is full and fair. On one hand he allows that Luther thought that it was involved in the general destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and he cites various travelers who had failed to find it; but, on the other hand, he gives a long chain of evidence to show that it continued to exist: very wisely he reminds the reader that the positive testimony of those who have seen it must outweigh the negative testimony of those who have not, and finally decides that the salt statue is still in being.

No doubt a work like this produced a considerable effect in Protestant countries; indeed, this effect seems evident as far off as England, for, in 1720, we find in Dean Prideaux's "Old and New Testament connected" a map on which the statue of salt is carefully indicated. So, too, in Holland, in the "Sacred Geography," published at Utrecht in 1758, by the theologian Bachiène, we find him, while showing many signs of rationalism, evidently inclined to the old views as to the existence of the salt pillar; but just here comes a curious evidence of the real direction of the current of thought through the century, for, nine years later, in the German translation of Bachiène's work we find copious notes by the translator in a far more rationalistic spirit; indeed, we see the dawn of the inevitable day of compromise, for we now have, instead of the old argument that the divine power by one miraculous act changed Lot's wife into a salt pillar, the suggestion that she was caught in a shower of sulphur and saltpeter, covered by it, and that the result was a lump, which, in a general way, is called in our sacred books "a pillar of salt."*

* For Briemle, see his "Andächtige Pilgerfahrt," p. 129. For Masius, see his "De Uxore Loti in Statuam Salis conversa," Hafniæ, 1720, especially pp. 29-31. For Dean Prideaux, see his "Old and New Testament connected in the History of the Jews," 1720,

But, from the middle of the eighteenth century, the new current sets through Palestine with ever-increasing strength. Very interesting is it to compare the great scriptural commentaries of the middle of this century with those published a century earlier.

Of the earlier ones we may take Matthew Poole's "Synopsis" as a type: as authorized by royal decree in 1667 it contains very substantial arguments for the pious belief in the statue. Of the later ones we may take the edition of the noted commentary of the Jesuit Tirinus seventy years later; while he feels bound to present the authorities, he evidently endeavors to get rid of the subject as speedily as possible under cover of conventionalities; of the spirit of Quaresmio he shows no trace.*

About 1760 came a striking evidence of the strength of this new current. The Abate Mariti then published his book upon the Holy Land; and, of this book by an Italian ecclesiastic, the most eminent of German bibliographers in this field says that it first broke a path for critical study of the Holy Land.

Mariti is entirely skeptical as to the sinking of the valley of Siddim and the overwhelming of the cities. He speaks kindly of a Capuchin Father who saw everywhere at the Dead Sea traces of the divine malediction, while he himself could not see them, and says, "It is because a Capuchin carries everywhere the five senses of faith, while I only carry those of nature." He speaks of "the lies of Josephus," and makes merry over "the rude and shapeless block" which the guide assured him was the statue of Lot's wife, explaining the want of human form in the salt pillar by telling him that this complete metamorphosis was part of her punishment.

About twenty years later another remarkable man broaches the subject in what was then known as the "philosophic" spirit—Volney. Between the years 1783 and 1785 he made an extensive journey through the Holy Land and published a volume of travels which by acuteness of thought and vigor of style secured general attention. In these, myth and legend were thrown aside, and we have an account simply dictated by the love of truth as truth. He, too, keeps the torch of science burning by applying his geological knowledge to the regions which he traverses.

As we look back over the eighteenth century we see mingled with the new current of thought, and strengthening it, a constantly increasing stream of more strictly scientific observation and reflection.

To review it briefly, in the very first years of the century Ma-

map at page 7. For Bachiène, see his "Historische und geographische Beschreibung von Palæstina," Leipzig, 1766, vol. 1, pp. 118-120, and notes.

* For Poole, see "Poli Synopsis," 1669, p. 179; and for Tirinus, the Lyons' edition of his "Commentary," 1736, p. 10.

raldi showed the Paris Academy of Sciences fossil fishes found in the Lebanon region ; a little later, Cornelius Bruyn, in the French edition of his Eastern travels, gave well-drawn representations of fossil fishes and shells, some of them from the region of the Dead Sea. About the middle of the century Richard Pococke, Bishop of Meath, and Korte, of Altona, made more statements of the same sort ; and toward the close of the century, as we have seen, Volney gave still more of these researches, with philosophical deductions from them.

The result of all this was that there gradually dawned upon thinking men the conviction that, for ages before the appearance of man on the planet, and during all the period since his appearance, natural laws have been steadily in force, and in Palestine as elsewhere ; this conviction obliged men to consider other than supernatural causes for the phenomena of the Dead Sea, and myth and marvel steadily shrank in value.

But at the very threshold of the nineteenth century Chateaubriand came into the field, and he seemed to banish the scientific spirit, though what he really did was to conceal it temporarily behind the vapors of his rhetoric. The time was propitious for him. It was the period of reaction after the French Revolution, when what was called religion was again in fashion, and when even atheists supported it as a good thing for common people ; of such an epoch Chateaubriand, with his superficial information, thin sentiment, and showy verbiage, was the foreordained prophet. His enemies were wont to deny that he ever saw the Holy Land ; whether he did or not, he added nothing to real knowledge, but simply threw a momentary glamour over the regions he described, and especially over the Dead Sea. The legend of Lot's wife he carefully avoided, for he knew too well the danger of ridicule in France.

As long as the Napoleonic and Bourbon reigns lasted, and indeed for some time afterward, this kind of dealing with the Holy Land was fashionable, and we have a long series of men, especially of Frenchmen, who evidently received their impulse from Chateaubriand.

About 1831 De Geramb, Abbot of La Trappe, evidently a very noble and devout spirit, sees vapor above the Dead Sea, but stretches the truth a little—speaking of it as “vapor or smoke.” He could not find the salt statue, and complains of the “diversity of stories regarding it.” The simple physical cause of this diversity—the washing out of different statues in different years—never occurs to him, but he comforts himself with the scriptural warrant for the metamorphosis.*

* For Mariti, see his “Voyage,” etc., vol. ii, pp. 352–356. For Tobler's high opinion of him, see the “Bibliographia,” pp. 132, 133. For Volney, see his “Voyage en Syrie et

But to the honor of scientific men and scientific truth it should be said that even under Napoleon and the Bourbons there were men who continued to explore, observe, and describe with the simple love of truth as truth, and in spite of the probability that their researches would be received during their lifetime with contempt and even hostility both in church and state.

The pioneer in this work of the nineteenth century was the German naturalist Ulrich Seetzen. He began his main investigation in 1806, and soon his learning, courage, and honesty threw a flood of new light into the Dead Sea questions.

In this light, myth and legend faded more rapidly than ever. Typical of his method is his examination of the Dead Sea fruit. He found, on reaching Palestine, that Josephus's story regarding it, which had been accepted for nearly two thousand years, was believed on all sides; more than this, he found that the original myth had so grown that a multitude of respectable people at Bethlehem and elsewhere assured him that not only apples, but pears, pomegranates, figs, lemons, and many other fruits which grow upon the shores of the Dead Sea, though beautiful to look upon, were filled with ashes. These good people declared to Seetzen that they had seen these fruits, and that, not long before, a basketful of them which had been sent to a merchant of Jaffa had turned to ashes.

Seetzen was evidently perplexed by this mass of testimony, and naturally anxious to examine these fruits. On arriving at the sea he began to look for them, and the guide soon showed him the "apples." These he found to be simply an *asclepia*, which had been described by Linnaeus, and which is found in the East Indies, Arabia, Egypt, Jamaica, and elsewhere; the "ashes" were simply seeds. He looked next for the other fruits, and the guide soon found for him the "lemons"; these he discovered to be a species of *solanum* found in other parts of Palestine and elsewhere, and the seeds in these were the famous "cinders." He looked next for the pears, figs, and other accursed fruits; but, instead of finding them filled with ashes and cinders, he found them like the same fruits in other lands, and he tells us that he ate the figs with much pleasure.

So perished a myth which had been kept alive two thousand years, partly by modes of thought natural to theologians, partly by the self-interest of guides, and partly by the love of marvel-mongering among travelers.

Egypte," Paris, 1807, i, 308 *et seq.*; also, for a statement of contributions of the eighteenth century to geology, Lartet in De Luynes's "Mer Morte," vol. iii, p. 12. For Cornelius Bruyn, see French edition of his works, 1714, in which his name is given as "Le Brun," especially for representations of fossils, pp. 309 and 375. For Chateaubriand, see his "Voyage," etc., vol. ii, part iii. For De Geramb, see his "Voyage," ii, 45-47.

The other myths fared no better. As to the appearance of the sea, he found its waters not "black and sticky," but blue and transparent; he found no smoke rising from the abyss, but tells us that sunlight and cloud and shore were pleasantly reflected from the surface. As to Lot's wife, he found no salt pillar which had been a careless woman, but the Arabs showed him many bowlders which had once been wicked men.

His work was worthily continued by a long succession of true and reverent men, among them such travelers or geographers as Burckhardt, Irby, Mangles, Fallmerayer, and Carl von Raumer: by men like these the atmosphere of myth and legend was steadily cleared away; as a rule, they simply forgot Lot's wife altogether.

Greatest of all in this noble succession was an American theologian, Dr. Edward Robinson, professor at New York, a man of whom his country and humanity may well be proud.

Beginning about 1826, he devoted himself for thirty years to the thorough study of the geography of Palestine, and he found a worthy coadjutor in another American divine, Dr. Eli Smith. Neither of these men departed openly from the old traditions; that would have cost a heart-breaking price, the loss of all further opportunity to carry on their researches. Robinson did not even think it best to call attention to the mythical character of much on which his predecessors had insisted; he simply brought in, more and more, the dry, clear atmosphere of the love of truth for truth's sake, and, in this, myths and legends steadily disappeared.

By doing this he rendered a far greater service to real Christianity than any other theologian had ever done in this field.

Very characteristic is his dealing with the myth of Lot's wife. Though more than once at Usdum, though giving valuable information regarding the sea, shore, and mountains there, he carefully avoids all mention of the salt pillar and of the legend which arose from it. In this he set an example followed by most of the more thoughtful religious travelers since his time. Very significant is it to see the New Testament injunction, "Remember Lot's wife," so utterly forgotten. These later investigators seem never to have heard of it, and this constant forgetfulness shows the change which had taken place in the enlightened thinking of the world.

But in the year 1848 came an episode very striking in its character and effect.

At that time, the war between the United States and Mexico having closed, Lieutenant Lynch, of the United States Navy, found himself in the port of Vera Cruz, commanding an old hulk, the Supply. Looking about for something to do, it occurred to him to write to the Secretary of the Navy asking permission to

explore the Dead Sea. Under ordinary circumstances the proposal would doubtless have been strangled with red tape; but fortunately the Secretary at that time was Mr. John Y. Mason, of Virginia. Mr. Mason was famous for his good nature: both at Washington and at Paris, where he was afterward minister, this predominant trait has left a multitude of amusing traditions; it was of him that Thomas Benton said, "To be supremely happy he must have his paunch full of oysters and his hands full of cards."

The Secretary granted permission, but evidently gave the matter not another thought. As a result, came an expedition the most comical and one of the most rich in results to be found in American annals. Never was anything so happy-go-lucky. Lieutenant Lynch started with his hulk, with hardly an instrument save those ordinarily found on shipboard, and with a body of men probably the most unfit for anything like scientific investigation ever sent on such an errand; fortunately, he picked up a young instructor in mathematics, Mr. Anderson, and added to his apparatus two strong iron boats.

Arriving, after a tedious voyage, on the coast of Asia Minor, he set at work. He had no adequate preparation in general history, archæology, or the physical sciences, but he had his American patriotism, energy, pluck, pride, and devotion to duty, and these qualities stood him in good stead. With great labor he got the iron boats across the country. Then the tug of war began. First of all investigators, he forced his way through the whole length of the river Jordan and from end to end of the Dead Sea. There were constant difficulties, geographical, climatic, and personal, but Lynch cut through them all. He was brave or shrewd, as there was need. Anderson proved an admirable helper, and together they made surveys of distances, altitudes, depths, and sundry simple investigations in a geological, mineralogical, and chemical way. Much was poorly done, much was left undone, but the general result was most honorable both to Lynch and Anderson, and Secretary Mason found that his easy-going patronage of the enterprise was the best act of his official life.

The results of this expedition on public opinion were most curious. Lynch was no scholar in any sense; he had traveled little, and thought less on the real questions underlying the whole investigation; as to the difference in depth of the two parts of the lake, he jumped—with a sailor's disregard of logic—to the conclusion that it somehow proved the mythical account of the overwhelming of the cities, and he indulges in reflections of a sort probably suggested by his recollections of American Sunday schools.

Especially noteworthy is his treatment of the legend of Lot's wife. He found the pillar of salt. It happened to be at that

period a circular column of friable salt rock, about forty feet high; yet, while he accepts every other old myth, he declares the belief that this was once the wife of Lot "a superstition."

One little circumstance added enormously to the influence of this book, for, as a frontispiece, he inserted a picture of the salt column. It was delineated in rather a poetic manner; light streamed upon it, heavy clouds hung above it, and as a background were ranged buttresses of salt rock, furrowed and channeled out by the winter rains: this salt statue picture was spread far and wide, and in thousands of country pulpits and Sunday schools it was shown as a tribute of science to Scripture.

Nor was this influence confined to American Sunday-school children, for Lynch had innocently set a trap into which several European theologians stumbled. One of these was Dr. Lorenz Gratz, Vicar-General of Augsburg, a theological professor. In the second edition of his "Theatre of the Holy Scriptures," published in 1858, he hails Lynch's discovery of the salt pillar with joy; forgets his allusion to the old theory regarding it as a superstition; and does not stop to learn that this was one of a succession of statues washed out yearly by the rains, but accepts it as the original Lot's wife.

The French churchmen suffered most. About two years after Lynch, De Saulcy visits the Dead Sea to explore it thoroughly, evidently in the interest of sacred science—and of his own promotion. Of the modest thoroughness of Robinson there is no trace in his writings. He promptly discovered the overwhelmed cities, which no one before or since has ever found, poured contempt on other investigators, and threw over his whole work an air of piety. But, unfortunately, having a Frenchman's dread of ridicule, he attempted to give a rationalistic explanation of what he calls "the enormous needles of salt washed out by the winter rain," and their connection with the Lot's wife myth, and declared his firm belief that she, "being delayed by curiosity or terror, was crushed by a rock which rolled down from the mountain, and when Lot and his children turned about they saw at the place where she had been only the rock of salt which covered her body."

But this would not do at all, and an eminent ecclesiastic privately and publicly expostulated with De Saulcy—very naturally declaring that "it was not Lot who wrote the book of Genesis."

The result was that another edition of De Saulcy's work was published by a Church Book Society, with the offending passage omitted; but a passage was retained really far more suggestive of heterodoxy, and this was an Arab legend accounting for the origin of certain rocks near the Dead Sea curiously resembling salt formations; this in effect ran as follows:

"Abraham, the friend of God, having come here one day with his mule to buy salt, the salt-workers impudently told him that they had no salt to sell, whereupon the patriarch said: 'Your words are true; you have no salt to sell,' and instantly the salt of this whole region was transformed into stone, or rather into a salt which has lost its savor."

Nothing could be more sure than this story to throw light into the mental and moral process by which the salt pillar myth was originally created.

In the years 1864 and 1865 came an expedition on a much more imposing scale—that of the Duc de Luynes. His knowledge of archæology and his wealth were freely devoted to working the mine which Lynch had opened, and, taking with him an iron vessel and several *savants*, he devoted himself especially to finding the cities of the Dead Sea, and to giving less vague accounts of them than those of De Saulcy. But he was disappointed, and honest enough to confess his disappointment. So vanished one of the most cherished parts of the legend.

But worse remained behind. In the orthodox duke's company was an acute geologist, Monsieur Lartet, who in due time made an elaborate report, which let a flood of light in upon the whole region.

The Abbé Richard had been rejoicing the orthodox heart of France by exhibiting some prehistoric flint implements as the knives which Joshua had made for circumcision. By a truthful statement Monsieur Lartet set all France laughing at him, and then turned to the geology of the Dead Sea basin. While he conceded that man may have seen some volcanic crisis there toward its end, and may have preserved a vivid remembrance of the vapor then rising, his whole argument showed irresistibly that all the phenomena of the region are due to natural causes, and that so far from a sudden rising of the lake above the valley within historic times, it has been for ages steadily subsiding.

Since Balaam was called by Balak to curse his enemies, and "blessed them altogether," there has never been a more unexpected tribute to truth.

Even the salt pillar at Usdum, as depicted in Lynch's book, aided to undermine the myth among thinking men, for the background of the picture showed them other pillars of salt in process of formation; and the ultimate result of all these expeditions of the century was to spread an atmosphere in which myth and legend became more and more attenuated.

To sum up the main points in this work of the nineteenth century, Seetzen, Robinson, and others had found that a human being could traverse the lake without being killed by hellish smoke; that the water gave forth no odors; that the fruits of the region

were not created full of cinders to match the desolation of the Dead Sea, but were growths not uncommon in Asia Minor and elsewhere; in fact, that all the phenomena were due to natural causes.

Ritter and others had shown that all noted features of the Dead Sea and the surrounding country were to be found in various other lakes and regions, to which no supernatural cause was ascribed among enlightened men. Lynch, Van de Velde, Osborne, and others had revealed the fact that the "pillar of salt" was frequently formed anew by the rains; and Lartet and other geologists had given a final blow to the myths by making it clear from the markings on the neighboring rocks that, instead of a sudden upheaval of the sea above the valley of Siddim, there had been a gradual subsidence for ages.*

Even before all this evidence was in, a judicial decision had been pronounced upon the whole question by an authority both Christian and scientific, from which there could be no appeal. During the second quarter of the century Prof. Carl Ritter, of the University of Berlin, began giving to the world those researches which have placed him at the head of all geographers ancient or modern, and finally he brought together those relating to the geography of the Holy Land, publishing them as part of his great work on the physical geography of the earth. He was a Christian, and nothing could be more reverent than his treatment of the whole subject; but his German honesty did not permit him to conceal the truth, and he simply classed together all the stories of the Dead Sea—old and new—no matter where found, whether in the sacred books of Jews, Christians, or Mohammedans; whether in lives of saints or accounts of travelers, as "myths" and "sagas."

From this decision there has never been among intelligent men any appeal.

* For Seetzen, see his "Reisen," edited by Kruse, Berlin, 1854-'59; for the "Dead Sea Fruits," vol. ii, p. 231 *et seq.*; for the appearance of the sea, etc., p. 243, and elsewhere; for the Arab transformation explanatory legends, vol. iii, pp. 7, 14, 17. As to similarity of the "pillars of salt" to columns washed out by rains elsewhere, see Kruse's "Commentary" in vol. iv, p. 240; also Fallmerayer, i, 197. For Irby and Mangles, see work already cited. For Robinson, see his "Biblical Researches," London, 1841; also his "Later Biblical Researches," London, 1856. For Lynch, see his "Narrative," London, 1849. For Gratz, see his "Schauplatz der Heyl. Schrift," pp. 186, 187. For De Saulcy, see his "Voyage autour de la Mer Morte," Paris, 1853, especially vol. i, p. 252, and his journal of early months of 1851, in vol. ii, comparing with it his work with the same title published in 1858 in the "Bibliothèque Catholique de Voyages et Romans," vol. i, pp. 78-81. For Lartet, see his papers read before Geographical Society at Paris; also citations in Robinson; but, above all, his elaborate reports which form the greater part of the second and third volumes of the monumental work which bears the name of De Luynes, already cited. For exposures of De Saulcy's credulity and errors, see Van de Velde, "Syria and Palestine," *passim*; also Canon Tristram's "Land of Israel"; also De Luynes, *passim*.

The adjustment of recent orthodox thought to this view presents some curious features. As typical we may take the travels of two German theologians between 1860 and 1870—John Kränzel, pastor in Munich; and Peter Schegg, lately professor in the university of that city.

The archdiocese of Munich-Freising is one of those in which the attempt to oppress modern scientific thought has been most steadily carried on. Its archbishops have constantly shown themselves assiduous in securing cardinals' hats by thwarting science and by stupefying education. The twin towers of the old cathedral of Munich have seemed to throw a killing shadow over intellectual development in that region. Naturally, then, these two clerical travelers from that diocese did not commit themselves to clearing away any of the Dead Sea myths; but it is significant that neither of them follows the example of so many of their clerical predecessors in defending the salt-pillar legend; they steadily avoid it altogether.

The more recent history of the salt pillar, since Lynch, deserves mention. It appears that the travelers immediately after him found it shaped by the storms into a spire; that a year or two later it had utterly disappeared; and about the year 1870 Prof. Palmer on visiting the place found at some distance from the main salt bed, as he says, "a tall, isolated needle of salt or salt rock, which does really bear a curious resemblance to an Arab woman with a child on her shoulders."

Three years later Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible" makes its concession to the old belief regarding Sodom and Gomorrah as slight as possible, and the myth of Lot's wife entirely disappears.

The theological effort to compromise with science now came in more strongly than ever. This effort had been made long before: as we have seen, it had begun to show itself decidedly as soon as the influence of the Baconian philosophy was felt. Clerg thought that the shock caused by the sight of fire from heaven killed Lot's wife instantly and made her body rigid as a statue. Eichhorn suggested that she fell into a stream of melted bitumen. Michaelis suggested that her relatives raised a monument of salt rock to her memory. Friedrichs suggested that she fell into the sea, and that the salt stiffened around her clothing, thus making a statue of her. Some claimed that a shower of sulphur came down upon her, and that the word which has been translated "salt" could possibly be translated "sulphur." Others hinted that the salt by its antiseptic qualities preserved her body as a mummy. De Saulcy, as we have seen, thought that a piece of salt rock fell upon her; and very recently Principal Dawson ventures the explanation that a flood of salt mud coming from a volcano incruited her.

But theologians themselves were the first to show the inadequacy of these explanations. The more rationalistic pointed out the fact that they were contrary to the sacred text: Von Bohlen, an eminent professor at Königsberg, in his sturdy German honesty, declared that the salt pillar gave rise to the story, and compared the pillar of salt causing this transformation legend to the rock in Greek mythology which gave rise to the transformation legend of Niobe.

On the other hand, the more severely orthodox protested against such attempts to explain away the clear statements of Holy Writ. Dom Calmet, while presenting many of these explanations made as early as his time, gives us to understand that nearly all theologians adhered to the idea that Lot's wife was instantly and really changed into salt; and in our own time, as we shall presently see, have come some very vigorous protests.

Similar attempts were made to explain the other ancient legends regarding the Dead Sea. One of the most recent of these is that the cities of the plain, having been built with blocks of bituminous rock, were set on fire by lightning, a contemporary earthquake helping on the work. Still another is that accumulations of petroleum and inflammable gas escaped through a fissure, took fire, and so produced the catastrophe.*

Against this sort of rationalism perhaps the most vigorous of recent protests appeared in 1876, in an edition of Monseigneur Mislin's work on "The Holy Places." In order to give weight to the book, he spread his qualities at great length on the title-page. Among other things, he was prelate of the papal household, apostolic prothonotary, a doctor of theology and of philosophy, and his work is prefaced by letters from Pope Pius IX and sundry high ecclesiastics—and from Alexandre Dumas. His hatred of Protestant missionaries in the East is phenomenal; he calls them "bagmen," ascribing all mischief and infamy to them; and his hatred is only exceeded by his credulity. He cites all the arguments in favor of the salt statue at Usdum as the identical one into which Lot's wife was changed, adds some of his own, and presents her as "a type of doubt and heresy." With the proverbial facility of theologians in translating any word of a dead language into anything that suits their purpose, he says that the word in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis, which is translated "statue" or "pillar," may be translated "eternal monument"; he is especially

* For Kränzel, see his "Reise nach Jerusalem," etc.; for Schegg, his "Gedenkbuch einer Pilgerreise," etc., 1867, chapter xxiv. For Palmer, see his "Desert of the Exodus," vol. ii, pp. 478, 479. For the various compromises, see works already cited, *passim*. For Von Bohlen, see his "Genesis," Königsberg, 1835, pp. 200–213. For Calmet, see his "Dictionarium," etc., Venet., 1766. For very recent compromises, see J. W. Dawson and Dr. Cunningham Geikie in works cited.

severe on poor Monsieur De Saulcy for thinking that Lot's wife was killed by the falling of a piece of salt rock, and actually boasts that it was he who caused De Saulcy, a member of the French Institute, to suppress the obnoxious passage in a later edition.

Nor did such rationalizing efforts fare much better among Protestant theologians. In his excellent work on "The Land of Israel," Canon Tristram makes an energetic protest against scientific explanations of biblical statements.

Between 1870 and 1880 came two killing blows at the older theories, and they were dealt by two American scholars of the highest character. First of these may be mentioned Dr. Philip Schaff, a professor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at New York, who published his travels in 1877. In a high degree he united the scientific with the religious spirit, but the trait which made him especially fit for dealing with this subject was his straightforward German honesty. He tells the simple truth regarding the pillar of salt, so far as its physical origin and characteristics are concerned, and leaves his reader to draw the natural inference as to its relation to the myth. With the fate of Dr. Robertson Smith in Scotland and Dr. Woodrow in South Carolina before him—both recently driven from their professorships for truth-telling—Dr. Schaff deserves honor for telling as much as he does.

Similar in effect, and even more bold in statement, were the "Travels" of the Rev. Henry Osborne, published in 1878. In a truly scientific spirit he calls attention to the similarity between the Dead Sea, with the river Jordan, to sundry other lake and river systems; he points out the endless variations between writers describing the salt formations at Usdum; accounts rationally for these variations, and quotes from Dr. Anderson's report, saying, "From the soluble nature of the salt and the crumbling looseness of the marl, it might be well imagined that, while some of these needles are in process of formation, others are being washed away."

Thus came out, little by little, the truth regarding the Dead Sea myths, and especially the salt pillar at Usdum; but the final truth remained to be told, and now one of the purest men and truest divines of this century told it. Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster, visiting the country and thoroughly exploring it, allowed that the physical features of the Dead Sea and its shores suggested the myths and legends, and he sums up the whole as follows: "A great mass of legends and exaggerations, partly the cause and partly the result of the old belief that the cities were buried under the Dead Sea, has been gradually removed in recent years."

So, too, about the same time, Dr. Conrad Furrer, pastor of the

great church of St. Peter at Zürich, gave to the world a book of travels reverent and thoughtful, and, in this, honestly acknowledged that the needles of salt at the southern end of the Dead Sea "in primitive times gave rise to the tradition that Lot's wife was transformed into a statue of salt." Thus was the mythical character of this story at last openly confessed by leading churchmen on both continents.

Plain statements like these from such sources left the high theological position more difficult than ever, and now a new compromise was attempted. As the Siberian mother tried to save her best-beloved child from the pursuing wolves by throwing over to them her less favored children, so an effort was now made in a leading commentary to save the legends of the valley of Siddim and the miraculous destruction of the cities by throwing overboard the legend of Lot's wife.*

But even this utterly failed, for there soon followed the worst blows of all. First, from Van de Velde, who made his journey in 1851 and 1852. He is a most devout man, but he confesses that the volcanic action at the Dead Sea must have been far earlier than the catastrophe mentioned in our sacred books, and that "the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah had nothing to do with this." A few years later a very eminent dignitary of the English Church, Canon Tristram, doctor of divinity and fellow of the Royal Society, who had explored the Holy Land thoroughly, after some generalities about miracles, gave up the whole attempt to make science agree with the myths, and used these words: "It has been frequently assumed that the district of Usdum and its sister cities was the result of some tremendous geological catastrophe. . . . Now, careful examination by competent geologists, such as Monsieur Lartet and others, has shown that the whole district has assumed its present shape slowly and gradually through a succession of ages, and that its peculiar phenomena are similar to those of other lakes." So sank from view the whole mass of Dead Sea myths and legends, and science gained a victory both for geology and comparative mythology.

An amusing result has followed this development of opinion. As we have already seen, traveler after traveler, Catholic and Protestant, now visits the Dead Sea, and hardly one of them follows the New Testament injunction to "remember Lot's wife." Nearly every one of them seems to think it best to forget her.

* For Mislin, see his "*Les Saints Lieux*," Paris, 1876, vol. iii, pp. 290-293, especially note at foot of page 292. For Schaff, see his "*Through Bible Lands*," especially chapter xxix. See also Rev. H. S. Osborne, M. A., "*Travels*," etc., pp. 267 *et seq.*; also Stanley's "*Sinai and Palestine*," London, 1887, especially pp. 290-293. For Furrer, see his "*En Palestine*," Geneva, 1886, vol. i, p. 246. For the attempt to save one legend by throwing overboard the other, see Keil and Delitsch, "*Biblischer Commentar ueber das Alte Testament*," vol. i, pp. 155, 156. For Van de Velde, see his "*Syria and Palestine*," vol. ii, p. 120.

Of the great mass of pious legends they are shy enough, but that of Lot's wife, as a rule, they seem never to have heard of, and, if they do allude to it, they simply cover the whole subject with a haze of conventionality and sacred rhetoric.*

Naturally, under this state of things, there has followed the usual attempt to throw off from Christendom the responsibility of the old belief, and in 1887 came a curious effort of this sort. In that year appeared the Rev. Dr. Cunningham Geikie's valuable work on "The Holy Land and the Bible." In it he makes the following statement as to the salt formation at Usdum: "Here and there, hardened portions of salt, withstanding the water, while all around them melts and wears off, rise up isolated pillars, one of which bears among the Arabs the name of Lot's wife."

In the light of the previous history, there is something at once pathetic and comical in this attempt to throw the myth upon the shoulders of the poor Arabs. The myth was not originated by Mohammedans; it appears, as we have seen, first among the Jews, and, I need hardly remind the reader, comes out in the Book of Wisdom and in Josephus, and has been steadily maintained by fathers, martyrs, and doctors of the Church, by at least one pope, and by innumerable bishops, priests, monks, commentators, and travelers, Catholic and Protestant, ever since. In thus throwing the responsibility of the myth upon the Arabs Dr. Geikie appears to show both the "perfidious genius" of his countrymen and their incapacity to recognize a joke.

Nor is he more happy in his rationalistic explanations of the whole mass of myths. He supposes a terrific storm, in which the lightning kindled the combustible materials of the cities, aided perhaps by an earthquake; but this shows a disposition to break away from the exact statements of the sacred books which would have been most severely condemned by the universal Church during at least eighteen hundred years of its history. Nor would the explanations of Sir William Dawson have fared any better: it is very doubtful whether either of them could escape unscathed to-day from a synod of the Free Church of Scotland, or of any of the leading orthodox bodies in the Southern States of the American Union.†

* The only notice of the Lot's wife legend in the editions of Robinson at my command is a very curious one by Leopold von Buch, the eminent geologist. Robinson, with a fearlessness which does him credit, consulted Von Buch, who in his answer was evidently inclined to make things easy for Robinson by hinting that Lot was so much struck with the salt formations that he *imagined* that his wife had been changed into salt. On this theory Robinson makes no comment. See Robinson, "Biblical Researches in Palestine," etc., London, 1841, vol. ii, p. 674.

† For these most recent explanations, see Rev. Cunningham Geikie, D. D., in work cited; also Sir J. W. Dawson, "Egypt and Syria," published by the Religious Tract Society, 1887, pp. 125, 126.

How unsatisfactory all such rationalism must be to a truly theological mind is seen not only in the dealings with Prof. Robertson Smith in Scotland and Prof. Woodrow in South Carolina, but, most clearly, in a book published in 1886 by Monseigneur Hausman de Wandelbourg. This work appeared in two ponderous volumes and with a great flourish of trumpets. To the name of the author was attached a long list of titles: among other things, he is Prelate of the Pope's Household, a Mitred Abbot, Canon of the Holy Sepulchre, and a Doctor of Theology of the Pontifical University at Rome, and the work is introduced by approving letters from Pope Leo XIII and the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Monseigneur de Wandelbourg scorns the idea that the salt column at Usdum is not the statue of Lot's wife; he points out not only the danger of yielding this evidence of miracle to rationalism, but the fact that the divinely inspired authority of the Book of Wisdom, written, at the latest, two hundred and fifty years before Christ, distinctly refers to it. He summons Josephus as a witness. He dwells on the fact that Pope St. Clement, Irenæus, Hegesippus, and St. Cyril, "who as Bishop of Jerusalem must have known better than any other person what existed in Palestine," with St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, and a multitude of others, attest as a matter of their own knowledge or of popular notoriety that the remains of Lot's wife really existed in their time in the form of a column of salt; and he points triumphantly to the fact that Lieutenant Lynch found this very column.

In the presence of such a continuous line of witnesses, some of them divinely inspired, and all of them greatly revered—a line extending through thirty-seven hundred years—he condemns most vigorously all those who do not believe that the pillar of salt now at Usdum is identical with the wife of Lot, and stigmatizes them as people who "do not wish to believe the truth of the word of God." His ignorance of many of the simplest facts bearing upon the legend is very striking, yet he does not hesitate to speak of men who know far more and have thought far more upon the subject as "grossly ignorant." The most laughable feature in his ignorance is the fact that he is utterly unaware of the annual changes in the salt statue. He is entirely ignorant of such facts as that the priest Gabriel Giraudet in the sixteenth century found the statue lying down; that the monk Zwinner found it in the seventeenth century standing, and accompanied by a dog also transformed into salt; that Prince Radziwill found no statue at all; that the pious Vincent Briemle in the eighteenth century found the monument renewing itself; that about the middle of the nineteenth century Lynch found it in the shape of a tower or column forty feet high; that within two years afterward De Saulcy found it washed into the form of a spire; that a year

later Van de Velde found it utterly washed away; and that a few years later Palmer found there "a statue bearing a striking resemblance to an Arab woman with a child in her arms." Thus ended the last great demonstration thus far on the side of sacred science—the last retreating shot from the theological rear-guard.

It is but just to say that a very great share in the honor of the victory of science in this field is due to men trained as theologians. It would naturally be so, since few others have devoted themselves to direct labor in it; yet great honor is none the less due to such men as Reland, Mariti, Robinson, Smith, Schaff, Stanley, and Tristram.

They have rendered even a greater service to religion than to science, for they have made a beginning, at least, of doing away with that enforced belief in myths as history which has become a most serious danger to Christianity.

For the worst enemy of Christianity could wish nothing more than that its main leaders should prove or insist that it can not be adopted save by those who accept, as historical, statements which enlightened men throughout the world know to be mythical. The result of such a demonstration would only be more and more to make thinking people inside the church dissemblers, and thinking people outside, scoffers.

Far better is it to welcome the aid of science, in the conviction that all truth is one, and, in the light of this truth, to allow theology and science to work together in the steady evolution of religion and morality.

The revelations made by the sciences which most directly deal with the history of man all converge in the truth that during the earlier stages of this evolution moral and spiritual teachings must be inclosed in myth, legend, and parable. "The Master" felt this when he gave to the poor peasants about him—and so to the world—his simple and beautiful illustrations. In making this truth clear, science will give to religion far more than it will take away, for it will throw new life and light into all sacred literature.

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